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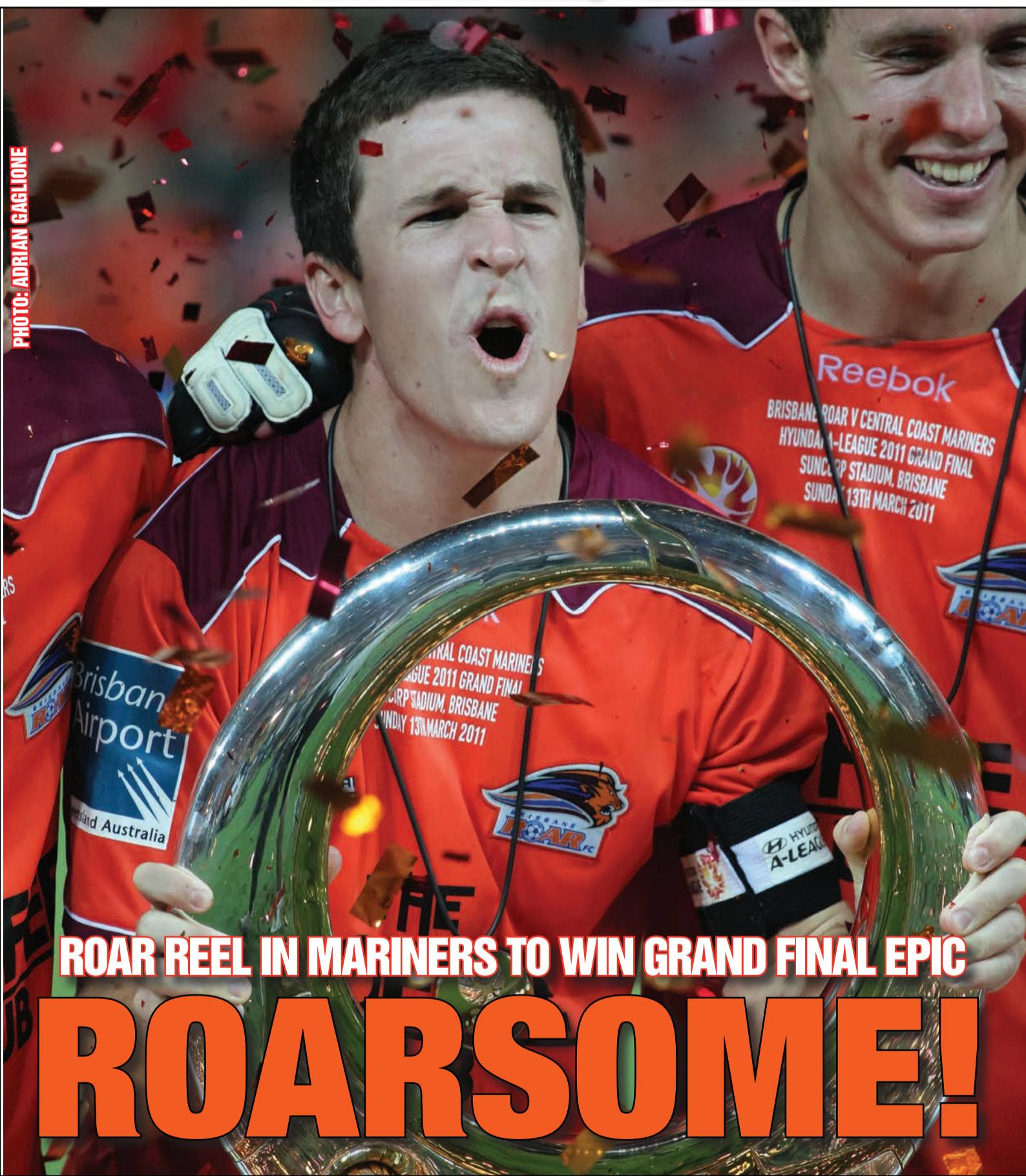
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# goal! weekly

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PHOTO: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



THE LINE-UP



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BRISBANE ROAR

2  
1

CC MARINERS

2  
1

Brisbane Roar (HENRIQUE 117', Erik PAARTALU 120')  
Central Coast Mariners (Adam KWASNIK 96', Oliver BOZANIC 102')

Hyundai A-League 2011 Grand Final Sunday, 13 March 2011

Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane

Referee: Matthew Breeze

Assistant referees: Ben Wilson and Brad Hobson

Fourth official: Strebrev Delovski

Crowd: 50,168

Brisbane Roar line-up: 1. Michael THEOKLITOS (gk), 2. Matt SMITH, 4. Shane STEFANUTTO, 5. Ivan FRANJIC, 6. Erik PAARTALU, 7. Kosta BARBAROUES (10. HENRIQUE 71'), 9. Jean Carlos SOLORZANO, 15. Matt MCKAY (c), 17. Mitch NICHOLS (8). Massimo MURDOCCA (82'), 22. Thomas BROICH, 23. Milan SUSAK (14. Rocky VINCENTE 102')

Substitutes not used: 12. Matt MUNDY, 20. Andrew REDMAYNE (gk)

Yellow cards: Nil

Red cards: Nil

Central Coast Mariners: 3. Joshua ROSE, 4. Pedj BOJIC, 6. Patrick ZWAANSWIJK, 8. Rostyn GRIFFITHS (24. Bernie IBINI-ISEI 89'), 11. Oliver BOZANIC, 14. Michael McGLINCHIEY, 18. Alex WILKINSON (c), 19. Matt SIMON (2. Daniel McBREEN 72'), 20. Mathew RYAN (gk), 22. Mustafa AMINI (7. John HUTCHINSON 61'), 23. Adam KWASNIK

Substitutes not used: 17. Chris DOIG, 30. Paul HENDERSON (gk)

Yellow cards: Nil

Red cards: Nil

Penalties:  
Brisbane Roar 4 (Ivan FRANJIC, Erik PAARTALU, Matt MCKAY, HENRIQUE)  
Central Coast Mariners 2 (John HUTCHINSON, Alex WILKINSON)

goal!  
weekly

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Advertising: 03 9551 7538  
Email: news@goalweekly.com  
Letters: mailbag@goalweekly.com  
Web: www.goalweekly.com

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# Brisbane Roar To Title In Grand Final Epic

By Jarrod Ellis

**BRISBANE ROAR'S** record breaking 2010/11 A-League season that included so many highs continued on Sunday evening as they performed an escape act of epic proportions to claim the A-League Grand Final crown.

Unbeaten in five previous matches against their opponents this season Brisbane went into the Grand Final as clear favourites but just as the skies turned dark so too it appeared did Brisbane's dreams of a League and Finals Series double.

The home side were unable to find a way through an impressive Central Coast Mariners team in regulation time and the visitors made the most of their chances in the opening half of extra time, taking a 2-0 lead that looked unassailable.

But as they did just two weeks ago the Roar came back from two goals down, sending the match to penalties where they ultimately prevailed.

Brisbane was in a party mood before the match, 50168, the biggest crowd of the season squeezing into Suncorp Stadium in the hope of seeing their side claim the 'Toilet Seat'.

The opening minutes were a nervy affair but Central Coast were the sharper of the two sides, causing Brisbane problems at the back with some slick movement, the visitors forcing their hosts to concede three corners early on.

The Brisbane defence appeared overawed by the occasion, small mistakes opening gaps for the Mariners. Mustafa Amini and Michael McGlinchey both looked to capitalise but some last ditch defending saw their shots blocked inside the box.

In the 11th minute Adam Kwasnik almost put his side in front, meeting a corner at the near post with a header that was only denied a goal by a goal line clearance from Matt McKay.

With the apprehensive mood settling over the crowd Broich and McKay combined on the left of the Mariners area, McKay breaking through to the by-line with the ball but was unable to place the ball past a well positioned Matt Ryan.

Ryan was called in to action again in the 20th min-

ute, crouching low to collect a curling outside shot from Kosta Barbarouses.

Broich was the thorn in Central Coast's side at this point, running at the defence and causing problems. A corner directly a result from his play in the 24th minute leading to a header from Milan Susak that drew the crowd to its feet before flashing wide of the far post.

As the match moved past the half hour both sides created chances in what was a free flowing, fast paced match. The best of those chances arriving in the 36th minute, Matt Simon running onto a low cross but was unable to get a shot on target only six yards from goal.

After coming so close to the lead it appeared for a moment that disaster had struck for the Mariners, Franjic sending in a shot from long range that deflected and left Ryan scrambling towards the wrong post. However the deflection took the pace of the ball and the keeper was able to recover just in time, much to the disappointment of the home crowd.

Just before the half Brisbane's much maligned Mitch Nichols almost broke the deadlock. Sprinting onto a loose ball in the box the young midfielder was unable to beat Ryan with a left footed effort from the near post.

The skies opened up at half time and when the two teams returned for the second stanza the crowd and pitch were soaked through by what could only be described as a torrential downpour.

The rain didn't stop either sides endeavour though; Jean Carlos Solorzano denied a goal by Matt Ryan's shoulder in the 47th minute.

The two teams traded shot

for shot as the rain pelted down, Theoklitos spilling an effort from Kwasnik and Ivan Franjic shooting wide of Ryan's goal.

The next fifteen minutes was a calmer affair neither team able to breakthrough the other's resolute defending.

The introduction of Brisbane's semi-final hero Henrique injected some life into Brisbane's play but the change proved superficial, fulltime arriving with neither side having broken the deadlock.

After a record breaking season Brisbane's fortunes



Last gasp goal scoring hero Erik Paartalu holds aloft the toilet seat. Photos: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

came down to a final thirty minutes.

Mariners substitute Bernie Ibini-Isei almost dealing the Roar a disastrous start in the 92nd minute, a powerful close range shot denied by Theoklitos.

The Mariners fans didn't have much longer to wait for a breakthrough though. With Theoklitos flapping at a Central Coast corner, the ball dropped to Kwasnik only a metre from the line and the striker made no mistakes, giving the Central Coast a 1-0 lead.

The 103rd minute then arrived with another goal for the visitors. A through ball from Ibini-Isei to Kwasnik caught the Brisbane defence too far up the pitch and the

Mariners raced through on goal. Theoklitos came forward to deny the shot but the ball fell kindly to Kwasnik who then crossed for Oliver Bozanic to tap into the net.

Brisbane rallied through the second period dominating possession before finally finding a goal through the combination of Broich and Henrique. The 'Slippery



Penalty shoot-out hero Michael Theoklitos saves the day for Roar.

Fish' squeezing a low shot past the imperious Matt Ryan.

The Brisbane crowd came to life and roared on their team as they tried desperately to find an equaliser. Then in a moment that seemed

scripted Erik Paartalu rose to meet a corner, heading the ball into the back of the net with the last touch of the match and sending Suncorp Stadium into raptures.

From there the match went

to penalties, a game of high drama decided by the most dramatic tiebreaker available to football.

Hutchison, Franjic, Wilkinson and Paartalu converted their chances respectively, the shootout poised at 2-2 when the Mariners' Daniel McBreen stepped up to the spot. Electing to send in a low shot on goal Theoklitos got a touch and placed Brisbane in the driving seat.

Brisbane's captain Matt McKay played his part,

converting his chance that left Pedj Bojic needing to score to simply level the scores. He powered an effort to Theoklitos' right, but the keeper, so often overshadowed by Ryan on the night pulled off a magnificent one handed save.

That left Henrique with the chance to seal the match for Brisbane, the Brazilian not wasting the opportunity and the stadium erupted in celebration.

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## Central Coast Mariners



**Ryan – 9**  
Helpless for both goals.  
Kept his side in it for most of the game.  
Almost saved Roar's first penalty.

**Bojic – 7**  
Got up and down the wing,  
provided decent support.  
Sound enough at the back.

**Wilkinson – 7.5**  
Held Roar off for so long,  
but it just wasn't to be.

**Zwaanswijk – 7.5**  
Presented the Alex Tobin medal prior to kick off, he did all you would expect of him.

**Rose – 6.5**  
Very quiet. Little contribution to the game.

**Griffiths – 6**  
Rather ineffective. Didn't see much from him.

**McGlinchey – 7**  
Found some fantastic space behind. Decent passing range, decent performance.

**Bozanic – 7.5**  
Took his goal well, pretty consistent threat down his flank.

**Amini – 6.5**  
Promising start but failed to maintain that standard. Considering his age, probably to be expected.

**Simon – 6.5**  
Provided a good target, but he spurned a golden chance in the first half. Overall was very quiet.

**Kwasnik – 8.5**  
Terrorized the Roar in the first half of extra time. A goal and an assist. Unlucky to be on the losing side.

**SUBS:**  
**Hutchinson – 7**  
One of the Mariner's more effective passers when he came on, was pivotal to both goals.

**McBreen – 6**  
Had his penalty saved and was very quiet when introduced.

**Ibini-Isei – 7**  
Changed the game. His pace and passing troubled the Roar.



Supersub Henrique converted the spot kick which earned Roar the championship.



The unlucky Mariners have now been the bridesmaids for a third Grand Final



Mariners keeper Matt Ryan pulls off a save early in the match.

**Les Shorrock's Action Packed Picture Page**  
PHOTOS: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



High octane action from Australia's showpiece match



Solorzano on the ball



Players line up before the match



Roar keeper Michaell Theoklitos is the hero of the penalty shoot-out.

## Brisbane Roar

**Theoklitos – 9**

Perhaps at fault for the second, but outstanding otherwise. The difference in the shootout.

**Franjic – 7.5**

Constantly provided an option down the right. Sound in defense.

**Smith – 7**

Solid at the back, but was caught out on occasion.

**Susak – 7.5**

Pitched in with some magnificent tackles.

**Stefanutto – 7**

Not outstanding without being poor, did his job soundly.

**Nichols – 7**

A decent attacking outlet, had a number of good chances which he failed to make the most of.

**Paartalu – 8**

Got the all important equalizer but was relatively quiet otherwise.

**McKay – 9**

Everpresent. Fantastic passing ability on display, an inspiration to his team.

**Barbarouses – 7**

Quiet. Some decent movement, but nothing to write home about.

**Solorzano – 7.5**

Good movement off the ball, could do without the diving, but he had a good game. Failed to capitalize on chances.

**Broich – 8**

Sheer brilliance at times, was at the centre of everything good about Roar in the first half, and made some telling contributions in the second.

**SUBS:****Henrique – 8**

Came on, and did what his manager wanted. Scored. A tough chance but he got enough power behind it.

**Murdocka -6.5**

Got stuck in, but was pretty quiet.

**Visconte – 7.5**

Didn't have much time, but he found space behind. Won the corner from which the equalizer came.

# Johnny Warren Medal a beautiful surprise for Flores



PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

MARCOS Flores, Adelaide United FC's first winner of the Johnny Warren Medal, says he went into the Hyundai A-League's Awards Night with no thoughts or preconceptions that he would walk away with the night's top honour.

# Dare to Dream As Cup Comes Alive

By Robert Di Fabio

**THE** inaugural Mirabella Cup draw was brought to life on Wednesday night with a live streaming of the event via the FFV website.

It was a catalyst for innovation and exhilaration for Victorian football. Exuberance, a sense of excitement and professionalism was evident throughout many within the Victorian football family. Tension and anxiety amongst club officials, administration, coaches, players and supporters would have been apparent throughout the televised draw.

The cup is only at the initiation process, however we are already experiencing the beauty, tradition and glamour of what cup football entails.

For these very reasons, cup fixtures will always be a unique figure within our game. It provides a distinctive insight into the differing dimensions of the standard league fixture in contrast to cup football.

Playing against opposition from a different division, unfamiliar surroundings and testing yourself against the entire state is the glamour and romance of this competition.

Reminiscent of the FA Cup, the Mirabella Cup will provide clubs with a similar foresight on the traditions and allure of cup football.

In the words of Sir Bobby Charlton "what would we do without football, for God's

## First Round Mirabella Cup - The Draw

### Northern:

Darebin United (P3) vs Heidelberg Stars (P3)  
Banyule City (S2) vs bye  
Bye vs Bye  
Bye vs Northern Falcons (P1)  
Bundoora United (M) vs bye  
La Trobe Uni (S3) vs Hume United (S3)  
Plenty Valley Lions (P2) vs bye  
Watsonia Heights (P3) vs Epping City (P2)

### Eastern:

Ringwood City (M) vs Croydon City (S3)  
Monbulk (P1) vs Mooroolbark (P1)

### Southern:

Peninsula Strikers (S3) vs Old Haileybury (3rds)  
Dandenong Warriors (M) vs Mornington (S3)  
Bye vs Frankston Pines (S3)  
South Springvale (S2) vs Berwick City (S3)  
Noble Park United (S2) vs Harrisfield Hurricanes (M)  
Dandenong City (S2) vs Heatherton United (S2)  
Hampton Park United Sparrows (P2) vs Seaford United (P2)  
Keysbrough (P3) vs Springvale City (P1)

### Western:

Western Eagles (P1) vs Werribee City (S2)

Keilor Park (S3) vs Altona City (S2)  
Westgate (S2) vs Brimbank Stallions (P1)  
North Sunshine Eagles (P1) vs Bye  
Westvale (P1) vs Hoppers Crossing (P2)  
Melton (P3) vs Altona North (M)  
Laverton Park (P1) vs Altona East Phoenix (S2)  
Williamstown (S3) vs Cainlea (3rds)

### Central:

Middle Park (P3) vs Elwood City (P2)  
Bye vs Maribyrnong Greens (S3)  
Yarra Jets (M) vs Yarraville (S3)  
South Yarra (P1) vs Melbourne Uni (S3)  
Old Melburnians (P1) vs Bye  
Bye vs Albert Park (M)  
Bye v Bye  
Collingwood City (P3) vs Bye

### North-East:

Bye vs Box Hill United (S2)  
Doncaster Rovers (S2) vs bye  
Nunawading City (S3) vs bye  
Eltham North (P3) vs Riversdale (P2)  
Marcellin Eagles (3rds) vs Ashburton (P2)  
Old Scotch (S3) vs bye  
Bye vs bye  
Doc United (M) vs Whitehorse United (P3)

### North-West:

Bye vs Moreland City (S2)  
Brunswick City (S2) vs bye

Bye vs FC Strathmore (P1)  
Moreland Wolves (P3) vs Moreland United (P2)  
Melbourne Tornado (P2) vs bye  
Tullamarine Jets (P3) vs Fawkner (3rds)  
Bye vs Bye  
Essendon Royals (P3) vs bye

### South-East:

Bye vs Bye  
Waverley Wanderers (S3) vs Brighton (P3)  
Bayside Argonauts (P2) vs Glen Waverley (M)  
Bye vs Kingston city (S3)  
Bye vs Beaumaris (P1)  
Bye vs Brandon Park (P1)  
East Bentleigh (P3) vs Caulfield Cobras (3rds)  
North Caulfield (S3) vs Monash Uni (P1)

### Wimmera/South Coast:

Bye vs Forrest Rangers (R)  
Bye vs Ballarat District (R)  
Bell Park (R) vs Ballarat Red Devils (S2)  
Surf Coast (S2) vs Bye  
Bye vs Springdale (R)  
Geelong (S2) vs Breakwater Eagles (R)  
Bye vs Corio (P1)  
Lovely Banks Lions (R) vs Warrnambool Wolves (R)

The battle ground of Moreland will be fiercely contested with local bragging rights coming into fruition. Moreland Wolves (Prov 3) will be hosting local rival Moreland United (Prov 2) in what is expected to be a highly competitive fixture.

Doc United are the only club to register their Master's squad (over 35's) in the competition. They will be attempting to overcome the more youthful Whitehorse United (Prov 3). The old boys will be determined to give them a shock up, could an upset be on the cards?

On the Western front, state league representatives Keilor Park and Altona City will face-off in a highly anticipated encounter. Club's withholding high pedigrees like them will not want to exit at the initial hurdle.

The Southern Zone will inevitably see two State teams exit the competition in the opening round. South Springvale (State 2) host Berwick City (State 3), while Heatherton United will have the daunting prospect of traveling away to Dandenong City's turf attempting to gain bragging rights before the league season.

The innovation of the Mirabella Cup is all set and ready for action. Fans and club officials have got what they demanded; let's hope the cup brings good fortune for Victorian football.

sake"? Football is a passionate game; let's hope the Mirabella Cup displays the true fervour from grass-roots to the professional amphitheatre.

The opening round for the first stage of the competition will take place this Saturday 19th March.

The subsequent winners will follow through to the next round on Saturday 26th March. As a result of the regular league seasons commencing on the 2nd April for all State, Provisional

and Metropolitan Leagues, all Mirabella Cup ties from then will be played as mid-week fixtures in conjunction to the customary league season.

From the 12 zonale regions, nine were drawn for the initial stage of the Mirabella Cup (the 8 Metropolitan Zones and 1 Country Zone). The following is the draw for the 1st Round of Stage 1: There are some mouth-watering contests with many local derbies throughout the opening round of the cup.

The northern section will see La Trobe Uni vs. Hume city- the two State League Two entries battle it out early in the competition. Epping City (Prov 2) will be traveling back to Gabonia Reserve to face old rivals Watsonia Heights (Prov 3) in what should be a heated and fiery encounter given their recent history.

There were only four entries in the Easter Zone where local honours will be up for the taking in the vein of Monbulk and Mooroolbark.

# Roar dominates All-Stars

**BRISBANE** Roar has dominated the Hyundai A-League 2010/11 All-Star team, as voted for by thousands of fans via the Hyundai A-League website, with six players and Head Coach Ange Postecoglou named in the final selection.

Postecoglou was the overwhelming choice for coach of the side as he guided Brisbane Roar to claim the premiership, recording a 25-game unbeaten run and losing only once during the regular season.

This achievement is further reflected with the selection of Michael Theoklitos, Luke DeVere, Ivan Franjic, Matt McKay, Thomas Broich and Kosta Barbarouses in the team.

The Hyundai A-League All-Star team represents players who have put in impressive

performances over the 27 weeks of football and to earn themselves a place in the final eleven.

Adelaide United continued their tradition of producing players deserving of recognition with leading goal scorer Sergio Van Dijk, playmaker Marcos Flores and defender Cassio selected in the 2010/11 team.

Central Coast Mariners defender Joshua Rose and Melbourne Victory striker Robbie Kruse completed the selection.

Outstanding performances by Brisbane Roar captain McKay and talismanic Victory striker Kruse earned them selection in the Qantas Socceroos squad for the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2011 squad where both featured prominently during the tournament.

Except for DeVere, who was

signed by K-League side Gyeongnam FC in January, all the players in the Hyundai A-League 2010/11 All-Star team featured in the Hyundai A-League 2011 Finals Series.

### A-League 2010/11 All-Stars (4-3-3):

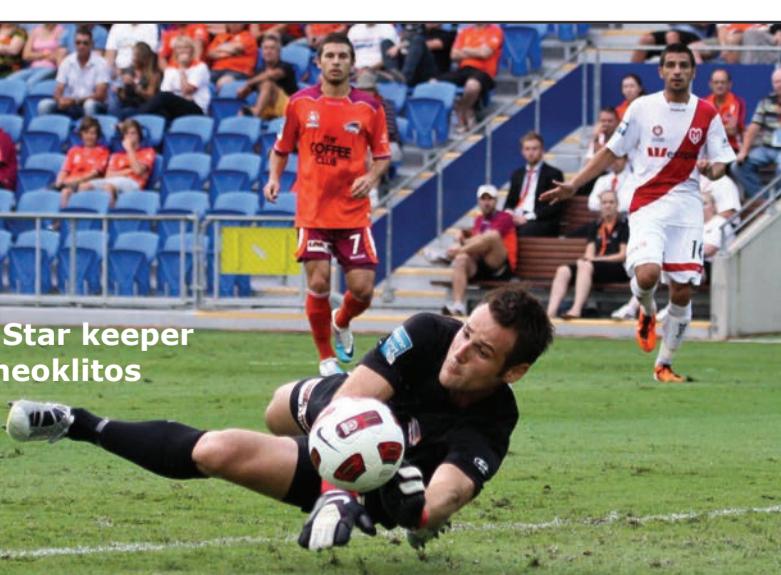
**Goalkeeper:** Michael Theoklitos (Brisbane Roar)

**Defenders:** Luke DeVere (Brisbane Roar), Joshua Rose (Central Coast Mariners), Ivan Franjic (Brisbane Roar), Cassio (Adelaide United),

**Midfielders:** Matt McKay (Brisbane Roar), Marcos Flores (Adelaide United), Thomas Broich (Brisbane Roar)

**Attackers:** Sergio Van Dijk (Adelaide United), Robbie Kruse (Melbourne Victory), Kosta Barbarouses (Brisbane Roar)

**Coach:** Ange Postecoglou (Brisbane Roar)



**Roar's All Star keeper**  
**Michael Theoklitos**

## MELBOURNE PHOENIX FC & GENOVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF SOCCER NOW IN THORNBURY!!



Genova International and Melbourne Phoenix FC are now offering scholarships for players born 1997 & 1998 to play in Melbourne Phoenix FC under 14 team. Goal Keepers are also being offered scholarship opportunities.

**The Training Scholarships offered are valued up to \$2000.**

Trials will take place Thursday March 17th however anyone wanting to attend before this date are to contact Angela Costantino 1300 793 505 asap.

In 2011 Melbourne Phoenix FC are playing in the FFV North/Central Zone and will be fielding the following teams U18A, U15A, U14A, U12, U10.

**1300 793 505**  
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## SHORT PASSES

### Georgie Jumper Night

Sunshine George Cross FC officially launches its 2011 season by holding their Annual Shirt Presentation Night / Club's 64th Birthday celebrations on Friday 25 March at Chaplin Reserve Anderson Road Sunshine. All our Senior & Under 21 players will be introduced, as will the two new coaches Chris Ketsakidis and Fabio Soncin.

The new gear for 2011 will be unveiled and the club will also welcomes the representatives of new supplier Alanic.

The highlight of the night will be the presentations of Life Membership Certificates to all living Life Members who will be in attendance. A BBQ Meal will be provided and the bar will be open.

Music will be provided by DJ Dominic.

Tickets are \$25. For reservations contact Lewis Cassar on 0415 368 157.

### Lions Season Launch

The Preston Lions Football Club invites you to attend the Official Season Launch & Jersey Presentation Night.

WHEN: Sunday 27th March 2011 @ 7:00pm

WHERE: Grand Neret Receptions 19 Salicki Avenue, Epping VIC 3076

DRESS: Lounge Suit

COST: \$55 per person (includes 3-course meal, beer, wine & soft drinks)

### FEATURING:

- The newest Macedonian band in Melbourne - 'DINAMIKA'

- Brazilian Latino Dancers

- Raffle with great prizes

- Sporting Memorabilia Auction

- Jumper Presentation to 2011 Seniors & Under 21s teams

- Annual Player Sponsorship Auction

### TICKET BOOKINGS:

Please contact Grand Neret

Receptions on 9401 4488 or email Preston.Lions.FC@gmail.com

### Roar Disaster Pledge

As a proud sponsor of the Brisbane Roar, ROAR Logistics, a U.S. intermodal marketing company (IMC) bearing the same name, will contribute \$1,000 to the Queensland Disaster Relief Fund for every goal scored by the team this weekend during the Hyundai A-league Grand-final match at Suncorp Stadium. Based in Buffalo, New York, ROAR-Logistics partnered with the team early in the season, and is thrilled with their undefeated 27-match run and Premiership honors.

### Sydney Olympic Season Passes are now available

Sydney Olympic Football Club would like to announce to all our fans and supporters that the 2011 Season Passes are now available.

Season passes for adults cost \$120 and \$60 concession. Visit [www.sydneyolympicfc.com](http://www.sydneyolympicfc.com) for an application form and the terms and conditions or call our office on (02) 9787 7890 and ask our staff to send you an application form.

### Gold Coast secure top AIS youngster

MIRON Bleiberg has snared one of the hottest properties at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) after securing the signature of young midfield playmaker, Jake Barker-Daish, on his first professional contract. Moss pens contract extension

### Moss pens extension

GOALKEEPER Glen Moss has this week put pen to paper on a one-year extension to his contract as Gold Coast United compile their squad for the 2011/12 season.

# Victory and Ernie part company

By Roy Hay

**THE most successful coach in the fledgling A-League and probably the highest credentialed coach in Australia, Ernie Merrick, and Melbourne Victory have parted company after six seasons.**

It is often said that there are only coaches who have been sacked and those who are about to be sacked, but Merrick has taken the club to three grand finals, winning two, and is the only survivor from the first year of the league.

He has presided over a team of sports scientists and assistants who have set the benchmark in this code of football in Australia. A journeyman player in Scotland and with Frankston City and Doveton in Australia, he qualified as a school teacher, and took up coaching long before he stopped playing.

Like many who had to work hard at their game, he had an insight into the difficulties young players face, which is often something which more talented individuals lack.

His strength has been the development of a host of young players into quality performers at national and international level, something he has done since his days at Preston Makedonia and Sunshine George Cross in the National Soccer League and later at the Victorian Institute of Sport.

Always willing to learn, he attended the UEFA accredited Pro Licence course in Scotland, receiving his certificate from the then Scottish coach, Craig Brown.

He was already the only High Performance coach in Australia. In a strange episode in 2000 he

was offered and accepted a position as National Women's Coach and head of the Australian Institute of Sport Women's Program, but was sacked in March 2001 without meeting the team.

This had nothing to do with Merrick's qualities but was the result of internal matters within the women's game at the time and Merrick received a financial settlement before returning to the VIS.

In 2005, he was appointed as head coach of Melbourne Victory.

Though he got enormous pleasure and satisfaction from the development of the talents with whom he worked, he never seemed comfortable in the role of senior coach for Melbourne Victory.

Perhaps it was because his first season was unsuccessful on the field, but he developed a siege mentality at the club and regarded any criticism and his critics with something bordering on contempt.

This persisted, despite the success which followed, as he attempted to manipulate the media at press conferences and in his few public offerings away from the requirements of the Football Federation Australia and the club.

Of course, he is not the only person in his position who seeks to get his retaliation in first. Scottish examples abound, including, pre-eminently, Sir Alex Ferguson, but in the Australian context, where the promotion of the game is almost as important as the playing, it does have its problems.

His relationship with Victory's inaugural captain, Kevin Muscat, helped define his tenure at the club.



Is this where Kevin Muscat learned to tackle? Ernie Merrick in his playing days.

Source: Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library

He had first worked with Muscat as a teenager at George Cross and had recognised the determination and commitment in the precocious youngster. In public Merrick strenuously supported Muscat for his leadership, promotional work, and influence on the younger members of the squad.

But he was then faced with the fact that some of Muscat's on-field behaviour tainted the image of the club and the Victory brand.

Victory has always maintained that its fans are the lifeblood of the club, but the relationship between the 'active supporters' and the hierarchy has always been somewhat fraught.

It is not just the well-publicised incidents which have occurred at

games, but the perception among many of the supporters that Victory was not always playing the style of football they wished to see.

This has intensified this season as Brisbane Roar was carried all before it with a mobile and high-intensity approach which Victory was only able to negate in the opening encounter of the season—the only defeat suffered by Roar.

Melbourne Victory remains by far the best supported team in the A-League, though attendances have dropped off from their peak in 2007.

In 2008, one quarter of all those who went to A-League home-and-away games went to see Victory at home.

The changes in the Board at

Melbourne Victory and in senior administration is probably the underlying reason for the decision to part company with Merrick.

There is no doubt that, as a keen student of the game, Merrick is capable of changing and adapting, but it would have been much harder in the current climate to sell a new direction for the club, if he had remained at the helm.

Once again it is not just performance which lies behind the decision to change coaches and it will be very interesting to see whether Victory benefits from the decision to make the change now.

## A-League's Competitive Balance Delivers 4 Champions in 6 Seasons

**BRISBANE Roar or Central Coast Mariners will be crowned as the A-League's 4th champion in 6 seasons on Sunday evening, with the Roar becoming the 6th of the 7 foundation clubs to have played on the game's biggest day. The Mariners – from the competition's smallest market – will play in their 3rd Grand Final, a feat matched only by A-League heavyweight Melbourne Victory.**

According to Professional Footballers Australia (PFA), these results highlight the effectiveness of the A-League's competitive balance policies which, uniquely in the world of football, feature a collectively bargained salary cap, fixed player rosters, freedom of movement for all out-of-contract players and a prohibition on transfer and compensation fees within the league.

"A lot of the talk about the salary cap focuses on the goal of financial viability. However, it is just as important to attain competitive balance," PFA Chief Executive Brendan Schwab said.

"Big and small clubs are now a universal feature of major

football competitions around the world. For the A-League to prosper, it is essential that the fans of all teams are given genuine hope that their team can not only be competitive, but become A-League champions.

"The A-League's policies have allowed the Roar to quickly turn their fortunes around and build the foundations for sustainable success. They have also rewarded the Mariners, who have introduced some of Australia's most promising young players.

"Surprisingly, in the short 6 seasons of the A-League, only Perth Glory – the competition's most established team that dominated the later years of the old National Soccer League (NSL) – have been unable to reach the league's final day," Schwab added.

Leading Australian sports academic Braham Dabscheck researches competitive balance in sports leagues by measuring average table position over time. His research has informed major legal cases into the relationship between competitive balance and labour market restraints that saw the National Rugby League

(NRL) player draft, the Australian Football League (AFL) permit system and the NSL transfer system all abolished.

According to Mr Dabscheck, if the A-League was perfectly balanced, all A-League teams would have an average table position of approximately 4.5. At the end of the 2010/11 season, 8 of the 12 clubs that have competed in the A-League, or 75%, lie within 1.5 points of this average.

During the recent strategic review of the A-League, the PFA commissioned Mr Dabscheck to study the mooted introduction of a transfer and compensation fee system within the A-League to operate in conjunction with the salary cap, a move strongly opposed by the PFA and which has since been taken off the table.

In his report, which was completed before this season's final results were known, Mr Dabscheck studied competitive balance in the English Premier League (EPL), the AFL, the NRL and referred to many adverse consequences of the transfer system which had compromised the old NSL including

### Average Position of Clubs In A-League: 2005/06 to 2010/11

Club	Years in League	Average Position
Gold Coast	2	3.50
Melbourne Victory	6	3.50
Sydney FC	6	4.00
Central Coast Mariners	6	4.00
Adelaide United	6	4.67
Queensland Roar	6	4.67
Newcastle Jets	6	5.00
Wellington Phoenix	4	6.00
Perth Glory	6	6.83
New Zealand Knights	2	7.00
Melbourne Heart	1	8.00
North Queensland Fury	2	9.00

Source:PFA

it creating classes of buying and selling clubs. On the issue of competitive balance, he found: "...an examination of the historical results of various competitions in Australia and the EPL has revealed that competitions based on transfer systems have not enhanced competitive balance; they have been very unequal. On the other hand, both the experience of the AFL and NRL provide support for salary caps enhancing competitive

balance. The A-League has been operating for five years. Its results provide tentative support for a league which is evolving towards one which will attain competitive balance. The worst effect of superimposing a transfer system onto the salary cap is that it will stop this evolutionary process and return Australian football to the dark ages of the NSL."

"The PFA will continue to press for financial and labour market

### SHORT PASSES

**SFC's match against Japan's Kashima Antlers postponed**

Sydney FC wishes to advise that its 2011 AFC Champions League match scheduled for Wednesday 16 March 2011 against the Kashima Antlers at Kashima Stadium in Japan has been postponed.

The Asian Football Confederation will work with Sydney FC, the Kashima Antlers and Football Federation Australia in the coming days to determine the best way forward.

Sydney FC wishes to express its thoughts and prayers are with the nation and people of Japan.

### Georgies Change Coach

Sunshine George Cross FC has appointed Fabrizio Soncin as caretaker coach following the parting of ways of coach Chris Ketsakidis. Ketsakidis was notified of the committee's decision following a meeting between the club and the coach. The Club wasted no time in appointing the former senior team assistant and current Under 21 coach to the senior role. Sunshine George Cross wishes Chris Ketsakidis all the best in his future coaching career.

### Mckay Wins Media Award

Brisbane Roar captain Matt McKay has been awarded the prestigious Football Media Association (FMA) Player of the Year. McKay earned 63 votes from the football media followed by team mate Thomas Broich with 36 votes and Marcos Flores of Adelaide United with 35 votes. Flores was awarded the peer-voted Johnny Warren Medal earlier in the week.

### Reds Fans the Best

FFA is proud to announce the inaugural winner of the Hyundai A-League Fan Group of the Year award – Adelaide United.

### Rojas signs for Victory

Melbourne Victory Football Club is pleased to announce it has secured the signature of highly regarded New Zealand youngster, Marco Rojas on a 2-year deal.

Suncorp pitch voted the best Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) announced that the players voted Brisbane Roar's Suncorp Stadium as the best pitch in the A-League for the second consecutive year.

### Cornthwaite off K-League

The influx of Australian defenders heading to Korea's K-League, has continued with Adelaide United agreeing to allow Robert Cornthwaite to join the Chunnam Dragons.

The 25 year old hopes to progress his career to the more lucrative K-League, although the pending two year deal is yet to be finalised and is subject to completing a medical.

policies that promote competitive balance, so that clubs are rewarded for the depth of their football culture and not just the depth of their financial resources," Schwab said. "This is essential to ensuring the A-League thrives in all markets."

For a copy of the Dabscheck report into competitive balance in the A-League, visit [www.pfa.net.au](http://www.pfa.net.au) and click on this news item.

## Krncevic's Crunchlines

Australian soccer legend, Eddie Krnceanic represented the Socceroos 35 times and scored 17 goals. He played professionally in Europe for Dinamo Zagreb (Croatia), MSV Duisberg (Germany), Mulhouse (France) and Anderlecht, FC Liege, Aalst and Charleroi in Belgium. Eddie is currently the coach of the VPL's South Melbourne FC.

With Eddie Krnceanic



GREETINGS football fans and welcome to another dose of Krnceanic's Crunchlines.

### Big News Week

It's been a huge week in the world of football as Brisbane Roar were crowned A-League champions and the announcement of Ernie Merrick's departure from Melbourne Victory.

No doubt plenty of discussion will be doing the rounds this week regarding the parting of Ernie and Victory, and it will be most interesting to see which direction Victory will decide to take as it embarks on a new era.

Overall, whilst the style of play adopted by Ernie wasn't neces-

sarily everybody's cup of tea, no one can take away the two championships and two premier's plates from him.

However, perhaps it was the fact that Victory was outshone in Asia on more than one occasion that convinced the powers that be that Merrick may not be the man capable of leading the club to the fortunes it desires on a bigger stage.

### Wrong Timing

I should have mentioned this in my column last week when I made some suggestions regarding how we can improve VPL crowds.

It seems pretty obvious to me

that if we want more people to come through the gates at VPL games then we shouldn't be playing VPL matches at the same time as the HAL Grand Final.

Yesterday, this was exactly the case. Two VPL games, one involving my own club, South Melbourne, against Heidelberg United, and the other between Springvale White Eagles and Melbourne Knights, kicked off and were contested smack bang in the middle of Australian club football's showpiece match of the year.

There's no doubt in my mind that both the VPL gates would have suffered as a direct result of the timing of these fixtures, and we're

seriously not doing ourselves any favours in making things easy to promote the game.

I'm sure quite a few of the players involved in yesterday's VPL matches, officials, fans and the like, would have also appreciated the opportunity to watch the HAL Grand Final as well as attend either one of the VPL games soon after yesterday.

The bottom line is that some obvious opportunities are being wasted in the running of the VPL competition.

I would like to ask, how can this possibly happen? To me, it just doesn't make any sense.

### While We're Still Young

I have also been mystified why the clearance of Ljubo Milicevic hasn't come through yet.

Regardless that he's signed for South Melbourne, it has been two weeks since his arrival and he was still not cleared to play in yesterday's match against Heidelberg United.

I just feel like it's the fans that are missing out, and once again it is an opportunity that the VPL

is missing out on to have such a quality player on its stage.

Let's hope that for everyone's sake the issue is sorted out soon so it doesn't drag on for another week.

### Number Crunch

It's been quite concerning of late of the news that yet another HAL club is facing financial instability.

Last week we had the announcement that the North Queensland Fury were no more, followed closely by the news that Brisbane Roar is seeking a new owner, and that Wellington Phoenix are also facing financial hardship.

When the A-league was launched in 2005 there was so much promise in the air, with TV deals done and slick marketing campaigns re-branding and re-packaging the product to appeal to whole new audience.

So six seasons later, why is it that so many clubs are struggling to stay afloat?

In my opinion, some fundamental factors are making it difficult for clubs to survive. Basically

the bigger overheads adopted in trying to run the clubs, combined with the inability to sustain the initial impressive attendances are the cornerstone of their financial struggles.

The biggest comparison one can make between the old NSL and the A-league is that whilst 'new football' has tried to take the game to new frontiers it is coming at a cost and the gamble doesn't appear to be paying off at this stage.

Whilst the old NSL clubs could keep the majority of the money from gate takings, the bar, the car parking and the catering from hosting a match at their own smaller venues, I'd imagine that the model presented by the A-league doesn't actually allow the clubs to keep such an extensive slice of the pie, and ultimately end up surrendering quite a substantial amount of the monies to the organisations that have control of the areas mentioned above.

Let's hope the game can pull itself through this financial turbulence.

bane, cannot provide a return on investment, what hope is there for the A-League and the other Teams in the Competition?

Their are rumours also floating around that the Wellington Phoenix will also shortly go Belly Up, with Owner Terry Serapis in a touch of financial bother.

Merrick's sacking also placed undue pressure on Roar Coach Postecoglou who is being banded about as Ernie's replacement, with a potential Victory offer of a 4 Year Deal about to be offered to him.

To his credit though, he refused to comment on this after Merrick's Sacking, citing that his focus was on the Grand Final, with the words "Zero Interest" being repeated by him many times, when asked if the Pin Stripe crew from the Victory had approached him.

It will be interesting to see if Zero Interest converts to Plenty of Interest after the Grand Final, as Postecoglou is a Home Grown Melbourne Boy, and it certainly irks him that after his NSL success with South Melbourne that he was not considered for Roles at Victory and then later on, the Heart.

Time will tell, and after another tumultuous week in the A-League

This is Katsa - just as you have known him

## Gas Bagging Dept.

### BOO'S WORLD



With Mark Boric

So, for the first time, Melbourne Victory will enter a game next week not being coached by Ernie Merrick. In the modern world of spin, he has not been sacked but there was a mutual decision to part ways. It was amicable apparently, but he was not at the press conference to confirm this himself.

So is the signature of Ange Postecoglou in the bag, or will the FFA step in now that they are controlling Brisbane Roar again and try to ensure he establishes a successful dynasty up North? Will a foreign coach be considered, particularly one with Asian experience? Is Ian Dobson an option after dominating the VPL? Would Dobson only want to take charge for the final third of the season? Phil Stubbins perhaps? Damien Mori maybe?

Will Gary Cole and Kevin Muscat also move on? If so it is a tremendous amount of upheaval in what has been the A League's most stable club. One must also wonder where to for

Ernie Merrick from here? Despite his success he has been much maligned at times, and it will be interesting to see if he will come into calculations when any vacancies arise.

The FFV have not accepted the attempt by South Melbourne to register Ljubo Milicevic outside the transfer window, so expect the Anglos at St Kilda Road to be a part of his next rant. Or should someone at the FFV be nervous, because Ljubo has "connections to the Underworld"? I hope no horses heads end up in any beds.

The A League teams Melbourne Victory and Melbourne Heart would have to favourites to take out the Mirabella Cup, but for sheer weight of numbers Bye FC must come into calculations by virtue of fielding so many teams across every zone.

The Scorer had a huge long weekend planned, however, new Melbourne Victory Chairman, Anthony Di Pietro had other ideas.

Barely 12 Hours into the top job at the Victory, he took the wicket of long time Gaffer, Ernie Merrick, citing that the Club needed to take a new direction.

This was Melbourne's worst kept secret with reports of Merrick's imminent sacking being blasted out during Friday, before the wicket finally fell on Saturday.

Di Pietro justified the decision with a long diatribe about the Victory needing to be the Benchmark of the Competition, and that their performances in Asia were unacceptable, however the decision to axe Merrick was a touch deeper than that.

Merrick, whilst being the most successful Coach in the A-League, fell victim to a few factors of fate which led to his demise.

His inability to effectively manage Kevin Muscat, and his handling of the aftermath of the infamous Mother of All Tackles that Muscat laid on Zahra, cer-

tainly did his cause no favours, with Fans threatening to vote with their feet.

Fans were also describing his style of Play boring, and lacking imagination, with some also adding that the Victory was far from a "clean" side when it came to their style of play.

Some would also comment on a very ageing Squad at the Victory, with Merrick constantly ignoring Local young talent, who would be picked up by rival Interstae Club's.

Merrick, to his Credit though, certainly had the Runs on the Board, however, of late, it can be said that he lost his way, with the thumping at the hands of gamba Osaka securing his demise from the Victory.

Credit where credit is due though, although I was not a big Fan of Ernie, he did take a Club from it's Infancy to 2 Titles in 6 years.

His Assistant, Healey and Football Ops El Supremo Gary Cole have kept their Jobs, however, if I were them, I would save seek.com.au as a favourite on their Browsers, as the new Coach will certainly want to

bring in his own people.

Another interesting decision that the Victory has taken it to appoint Youth Coach Durakovic to look after the Team for the remaining Asian Cup Games. What is interesting about this decision is that Durakovic has no Senior Coaching experience, and this further highlights that the Board has no confidence in Healy who has been Assistant Coach since the Club's inception.

Unfortunately, the A-League Grand Final between the Roar and Mariners has played second and third fiddle this week, in what can be described as a Public Relations disaster.

Prior to Ernie's sacking, the A-League El Supremos, who are about as effective in the area of Marketing and Public Relations, as I am at an AA Meeting, announced that the Directors of the Roar would be handing back their Licence to the FFA.

Why they could not wait to announce this until after the Grand Final is beyond me.

If the best Team in the Competition who have taken all before it with a 27 Match unbeaten run, who have a monopoly in Bris-

## THE KATSA



With George Katsamboukas

# END OF SUMMER SALE NOW ON ACROSS ALL STORES

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World Club Championship 2000

# BLAST FROM THE PAST

With Roy Hay



In 2011 Ange Postecoglou has taken Brisbane Roar to the Grand Final of the A-League confirming once again that he is one of the most talented coaches this country has ever produced.

Eleven years ago he led South Melbourne to the first FIFA World Club championship in Rio de Janeiro where he came up against Manchester United, Vasco da Gama from Brazil and Necaxa from Mexico, each of whom had won their confederation club championship. Against such opposition, South Melbourne put up an excellent display, scoring against Necaxa through John Anastasiadis and keeping all three opponents honest.

Winning the National Soccer League premiership was probably the hardest part of qualifying for the World Club championship. South Melbourne finished the home and away season a point behind Sydney United in 1999 but qualified first for the Grand Final with a two-one home win against United at Bob Jane Stadium, followed by a scoreless draw at Edensor Park in Sydney. United beat Perth Glory in the Preliminary Final so the two best teams met again to decide the title at Olympic Park in front of 15,914. Mile Sterjovski put United ahead after only eight minutes and the visitors held their lead till Paul Trimboli equalised eight minutes into the second half. Veteran John Anastasiadis replaced Michael Curcija in the 63rd minute and scored with virtually his first touch. His second goal in the 87th minute secured the win, despite a late consolation goal to United substitute Danny Townsend in the 90th minute. Incidentally that result meant that South had successfully defended the title it had won the previous year, when it led the league and then beat Carlton in the Grand Final.

The next stage of qualifying took South Melbourne to the Oceania Confederation championship which was played as a tournament in Fiji. South was drawn in Group A with Malaita Eagles from the Solomon Islands and Konica FC from American Samoa. Wins by two-one of the Eagles and ten-nil over the hapless Samoans saw Souths through to the semi-final where they accounted for AS Venus, the Tahitian champions, by three goals to nil. It might have been expected that Central United, the New Zealand champions, would have provided the opposition in the final, but Nadi, the home team from Fiji, had upstaged them by a goal to nil in the other semi-final. South Melbourne had no trouble in the final scoring five unanswered goals before a late Djianjian strike. Steve Iosifidis, David Clarkson, Michael Curcija with a penalty, Vaughan Coveny and Steve Panopolous were on target for the Blues.

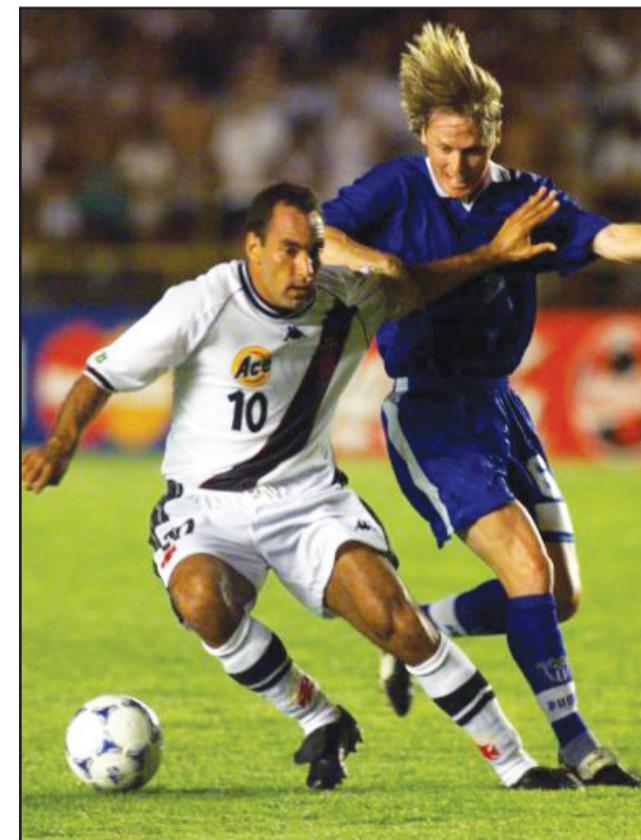
So South Melbourne set off for Brazil to represent Australia and Oceania against the best teams in the world in January 2000. The first game was against Vasco da Gama led by Brazilian World Cup winner Romario and South took the field



Paul Trimboli takes to the field with Vasco Da Gama's Edmundo at the Maracana Stadium in Rio De Janeiro Photo: Courtesy SMFC



Fausto de Amicis holds off Manchester United's Andy Cole. Photo: Courtesy SMFC



South Melbourne's David Clarkson and Vasco da Gama's Edmundo. Photo: Courtesy SMFC



South Melbourne's George Goutzioulis and Manchester United's Ole Gunnar Solksjaer. Photo: Courtesy SMFC

with Chris Jones in goal, Steve Iosifidis, Con Blastsis, Nick Orlie, Goran Lozanovski, Steve Panopolous, Paul Trimboli (replaced after 80 minutes by John Anastasiadis), David Clarkson, Fausto de Amicis, Robert Liparoti and Michael Curcija (with Vaughan Coveny substituting in 74 minutes). The Blues held the home team scoreless until the 53rd minute when Felipe scored. Edmundo, 'the animal', got a second goal in the 86th minute as South Melbourne chased an equaliser.

The second match in the group against Necaxa was very closely fought. Cristian Montecinos converted a penalty after 18 minutes

and Augustin Delgado made it two-nil to the Mexicans in 28 minute, but John Anastasiadis, who started in place of Michael Curcija, pulled a goal back on the stroke of half-time. Curcija, Jim Tsekenis and George Goutzioulis were the second half substitutes as South took the game to its opponent. A second penalty after 78 minutes scored by Salvador Cabrera snuffed out the Australian revival.

It did not get any easier in the third game when Souths faced Manchester United, which had controversially withdrawn from the FA Cup (at the request of the Football Association) in order to take part in the tournament in the belief that

participation would assist England's bid to host the World Cup in 2006.

Manchester United was coming off a season in which it had won the League and Cup double in England and then the Champions League in an extraordinary final against Bayern Munich. South African Quinton Fortune was the destroyer for United with two goals in the 8th and 20th minutes and there was no way back for South Melbourne. George Goutzioulis and Jim Tsekenis came on for Robert Liparoti and David Clarkson respectively. Some have argued that United did not take the tournament seriously, but the players were committed enough and David Beckham was sent off

against Necaxa.

South Melbourne was by no means disgraced by its performance, though the gulf in talent available to the overseas teams was apparent. There may have been some let down after this taxing effort which came mid-season in the NSL, for South finished well down the league in 2000. At the conclusion of the league Postecoglou left the club to become coach of the Australian youth teams. The following season, South Melbourne bounced back to top the ladder by eight points in 2001 and lose the Grand Final narrowly to Wollongong. The South coach that year was Micky Petersen.

## World Club Championship 2000

### Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	G	Pts
Corinthians (Bra)	3	2	1	0	6	2	+4	7
Real Madrid (Esp)	3	2	1	5	8	5	+3	7
Al-Nassr (Sau)	3	1	0	2	5	8	-3	3
Raja Casablanca (Mor)	3	0	0	5	9	4	-4	0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	G	Pts
Real Madrid 1 - 0 Al-Nassr	1	1	0	0	3	2	-1	3
Corinthians 2 - 0 Raja	1	2	0	0	5	3	-2	3
R Madrid 2 - 2 Corinthians	1	1	1	0	4	4	-2	3

Raja 3 - 4 Al-Nassr

Real Madrid 3 - 2 Raja

Al-Nassr 0 - 2 Corinthians

### Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	G	Pts
Vasco da Gama (Bra)	3	3	0	2	7	5	+2	9
Necaxa (Mex)	3	1	1	5	4	4	+1	4
Manchester United (Eng)	3	1	1	4	4	4	0	4
South Melbourne (Aus)	3	0	0	3	1	6	-6	0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	G	Pts
Man Utd 1 - 1 Necaxa	1	1	1	1	3	3	-2	3
Vasco 2 - 0 Sth Melb	1	2	0	1	5	3	-2	3
Man Utd 1 - 3 Vasco	1	3	0	1	6	3	-6	3

Sth Melb 1 - 3 Necaxa

Man Utd 2 - 0 Sth Melb

Necaxa 1 - 2 Vasco

### Second Stage

	P	W	D	L	F	A	G	Pts
3rd Place Real Madrid 1 - 1 (3 - 4 pens) Necaxa	1	1	1	1	3	3	-2	3
Final Vasco da Gama 0 - 0 (3 - 4 pens) Corinthians	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0

### Top Scorers

	Player	Goals
3 goals	Romario (Vasco) & Anelka (Real)	3

# Latin Scene with Francis Fields

## Wedding bells for Forlán and more surprises in the Libertadores

Uruguayan international and Atlético Madrid forward Diego Forlán is tying the knot, and marrying Argentine model Zaira Nara.

The two announced their plans the Wednesday of last week on their Twitter accounts. Not to sound like a gossip magazine however, they did not specify the date of the wedding nor where it would be held.

The 31-year-old Forlán was named the best player in last year's World Cup in South Africa, leading his Uruguay team to fourth place. The 22-year-old Nara have been a couple for several years.

Recently disappointed with a lack of touches and suspecting a boycott from his teammates at the Madrid club from the Vicente Calderón, he also expressed to newspaper El País about his desire of returning home in Montevideo to reunite with his family especially and play with his beloved Peñarol, he said in reference to his father - former club great Pablo Forlán.

Speaking of the Uruguayan club, Peñarol defeated Ecuador's Liga de Quito 1-0 on the Wednesday of last week to move into first place in their Group 8 of the Copa Libertadores.

Luis Aguiar scored the deciding goal in the 58th minute, driving a left-footed shot into the net following a well-placed corner. Peñarol, a five-time winner and nine-time finalist of the competition, improved to six points from three matches, with 2008 winner Liga de Quito of Ecuador staying on three points from three matches.

This left Godoy Cruz of Mendoza leaping from last to first in Group 8 by winning 3-1 at fellow



Diego Forlán has announced during the past week he will tie the knot. Seen here with GW reporter Daniel Campos, aka Francis Fields.

Argentine club Independiente last Thursday.

Godoy Cruz moved ahead of Peñarol on goal difference on six points after three games. Independiente and Ecuador's Liga de Quito have three points apiece.

In Group 4, the Chilean capital of Santiago hosted two matches last week as Caracas of Venezuela travelled to defeated the wealthy side of town at Universidad Católica, winning 3-1.

The victory moved the Venezuelans to the top of the group with six points from two matches. Universidad Católica has four points from three games.

Luis Cabezas gave Caracas the lead in the 46th, then Panamanian Nelson Barahona added another three minutes later and Cabezas got his second to made it 3-0 in the

51st. Pablo Calandria got one back but Universidad Católica's misery was compounded by the dismissal of defender Hans Martinez, 20 minutes from time for a second bookable offence.

Caracas FC therefore scored three goals in three minutes right after halftime for a remarkable 3-1 upset win away to the current Chilean champions and former 1992 Libertadores runners-up.

"It's really pleasing to see the young players in our team playing so well in a competition as important as the Libertadores," Caracas coach Ceferino Bencomo said.

"Venezuelan football has progressed a lot ... today, Venezuela and Caracas can play as equals against anyone," he told the journalists from Argentine broadcaster Fox Sports.

The following night, on the Thursday, Chile's Unión Española hosted Argentina's Vélez Sarsfield at the Santa Laura stadium and won 2-1 leaving the Buenos Aires giant with two losses to Chilean sides in two consecutive weeks.

Paraguay's Cerro Porteño drew 1-1 with Venezuela's Deportivo Táchira - the surprise packet of the tournament so far.

Uruguayan international midfielder Martín Liguera gave Unión Española the lead against Vélez Sarsfield early in the fifth minute and Braulio Leal increased the advantage in the 27th. David Ramírez reduced the deficit with a 70th-minute goal for Vélez, but the Argentine club was unable to find an equalizer despite heavy pressure on Unión's goal in the final minutes.

The result put Unión level on four points with cross-town rivals Universidad Católica, based in in Group 4.

Venezuela's Caracas as mentioned is the surprise leader at the group's halfway point with six points, while Vélez is sitting last with three.

Facundo Parra opened for Independiente in the 16th minute against Godoy Cruz, but a deflected Nicolás Olmedo header leveled the scores in the 29th.

Ariel Rojas scored in the 33rd to put Godoy Cruz ahead and Rubén Ramírez added the third in the 57th. Olmedo's header from a free kick looked to have been turned into his own net by Independiente defender Hernán Fredes, but the referee gave the goal to the Godoy Cruz player.

"We were able to play coolly because after they opened the scoring we equalized and quickly went ahead. The third goal helped

us to relax," said Ramírez.

In Group 2, Atlético Junior of Barranquilla, Colombia defeated Oriente Petrolero of Bolivia 2-0. Junior has a perfect record with three matches and three victories with some scintillating football especially from revived Colombian international play maker Giovanni Hernández. The Bolivians have lost their first three matches. Victor Cortés gave the Colombians a 1-0 lead with a header in the 26th, and Luis Páez made it 2-0 just before the end of the first half. Juan Carlos Arce scored late in the second half for Oriente Petrolero.

In Group 7, Argentine champion Estudiantes de La Plata came from a goal down to defeat Paraguay's Guarani 2-1. Pablo Caballero gave Guarani a 1-0 lead in the 44th on a penalty. But Estudiantes scored two goals early in the second half—Pablo Barrientos in the 51st and Leandro González in the 54th—to put the match away. Estudiantes have six points from three matches—one behind Brazil's Cruzeiro—and Guarani has lost its first three matches.

Estudiantes, coming back from a 5-0 roasting by group seven leaders Cruzeiro, came from behind to beat Guarani of Paraguay 2-1 in Asunción for their second successive win.

After three matches, the Argentine side are six points, three less than the Brazilians. Deportes Tolima of Colombia are third with four points and Guarani bottom with none.

Striker Pablo Caballero put Guarani ahead with a penalty just before halftime but Estudiantes hit back with two goals in three minutes.

Midfielder Pablo Barrientos

swept the ball in from a low left cross by winger Enzo Pérez in the 50th minute for the equalizer. Leandro González then struck the sweet winner, right-footed from the left edge of the box that curled inside the far post with goalkeeper Pablo Aurrecochea getting a hand to the ball but failing to turn it round the post.

"We played poorly in the first half. The halftime talk from (coach) Eduardo (Berizzo) did us a lot of good, we played some good football early in the second half and then controlled the game," said defender Leandro Desabato, standing in as captain of Estudiantes for the injured Juan Sebastian Verón.

Finally in group 5, Deportivo Táchira's Sergio Herrera dribbled through two challenges before hitting a left-footed shot into the top corner from 30 yards out to equalize for the Venezuelans in the 61st minute at Cerro Porteño. Roberto Nanni had given the home side the lead in the 28th with his sixth goal of the tournament to lead the scoring charts.

The draw kept the Paraguayans of Cerro Porteño atop the group with five points after playing a game more than Chile's Colo Colo, which has three. Santos of Brazil has two from two, while Táchira has two from three.

So plenty of new names causing upsets with Godoy Cruz taking the honours for Argentinean clubs and both Venezuelan representatives playing strongly.

Perhaps gone are the days of the traditional Brazilian powerhouses though the half-way mark has only reached for some clubs in the group stage and plenty of action remains to be played on the road to the final in June.

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# Queensland Prepares For Kick Off

By Jarrod Ellis

AS ever the Hyundai QSL had a tumultuous offseason, this time around two new clubs joined the competition in the form of Gold Coast Stars and Southern Cross United, a move that sees the league's numbers swell to ten.

Reigning champions Sunshine Coast will start the season as favourites for the title with fellow powerhouses Brisbane Strikers their only clear rivals.

**Brisbane Strikers**  
2010 – 2nd (Grand Final Runners Up)  
Coach – David Large  
Player to Watch – Nick Robinson  
Home Ground – Perry Park

After finishing top of the league in 2010 Brisbane were denied 'the double' by a determined Sunshine Coast outfit, going down 1-0 at Perry Park. The result left Brisbane with a third successive defeat in the QSL showpiece, a run of results that would leave a lesser team shattered.

However, Brisbane coach David Large is determined he can take his charges back to the top this season and with a relatively unchanged squad there seems no reason why the Strikers can't finally claim the Championship this time around.

The squad abounds with youthful promise, Matt Thurtell, Jordan Mason, Brendan White and Nathan Alexander all in their teens and in a team that's widely expected to finish in the top two come the end of the season.

Two prominent players from last year's squad won't be returning however, goalkeeper Seb Usai, who left for A-League club North Queensland Fury, and defender Matija Simic who is pursuing his football career elsewhere.

The clubs major new signing comes in the shape of Nick Robinson, a rangy striker who's plied his trade for the likes of FC United of Manchester, Richmond Eagles FC and Green Gully Cavaliers. If Robinson can strike up a good combination with Thurtell and Sean Burke, Brisbane will be extremely difficult to resist going forward.

#### Squad:

Jason Shade, Sean Burke, Gareth Musson, Matt Thurtell, Ryan Mottin, Wayne Knipe, Ben Griffin, Nathan Alexander, Nick Robinson, Myles Carseldine, Dylan Goodman, Chris Di Sipio, Jonti Richter, Josh Searle, Brendan White, Michael Angus, Chay News, Jordan Mason, Matt Christensen, Chris Maher.

**Bundaberg Spirit**  
2010 – 8th  
Coach – Tony Roebuck  
Player to Watch – Dale Hill  
Home Ground – Martens Oval

Despite an impressive resurgence at the end of last season Bundaberg were unable to avoid collecting their second successive Hyundai QSL wooden spoon.

The club will start the 2011 season absent the imports that made such a noticeable impact, instead hoping that the veteran members of the squad will stay injury free and the younger players will quickly find their feet.



Sunshine Coast Fire with the QSL trophy last season. Photo: ROBYN WOODALL

New coach Tony Roebuck's pre-season has been interrupted by local flooding and has seen mixed results but Roebuck remains confident of the Spirit's chances,

"It is all shaping up pretty well – we've had a great off-season, physically we are fitter than this time last year and we are mentally stronger.

"We have to cut out the silly errors in our game and finish our chances, but the positive thing in the trials was the chances we created, and the boys have worked hard on finishing them in the last few weeks."

At the other end of the field the Spirit have cause for excitement, having signed 20-year-old Sunshine Coast native Dale Hill, a prospect that Goalkeeping Australia Academy head John Gorza is said to rate highly. With his new team having conceded a league high 65 goals last season, the young keeper will need to display his full range of talents in goal.

#### Squad:

Brett Kitching, John Brillante, Josh Cullen, Luke Legget, Jack Hambrecht, Laurie Stephensen, Lucas Read, Cory Haack, Jason McEwan, Matthew Mills, Elliott Causer, Tom Kimber, Jason De Papi, David Hill.

**Capricorn Cougars**  
2010 – 6th  
Coach – Washington Gonzales  
Captain – Trevor Wood  
Player to Watch – Johnathon Sauer  
Home Ground – Jardine Park

The Cougars suffered a disappointing season in 2010, placing two spots off finals football but never really looking like deserving a place.

Coach Washington Gonzales will have his first full season in charge this year, a move that will hopefully pay dividends for the Rockhampton club who've struggled to find success in the QSL.

Gonzales reportedly will set up his side in a 4-3-3 formation, a move that's been met with approval from the players in what is a predominantly new team.

With so many young players in the squad the senior players will need to step up, Bryce Ruthven and Trevor Wood will be expected to lead the way whilst the club has high hopes for the future of young

midfielder Johnathon Sauer.

#### Squad

Tim English, Chris Thomson, Max Thomson, Joe Burke, Trevor Wood, Jesse Thompson, Bryce Ruthven, Johnathon Sauer, Michael Steere, Michael Cay, Tyler Stross, Jarrod Lancaster, Jordan Rose, Tim Hickey, Matt Sauer, Chris Swain, Jordan Miller

**FAR NORTH QLD BULLS**  
2010 – 3rd  
Coach – Peter Tokesi  
Player to Watch – David Ruiz  
Home Ground – Borzi Park

After a disappointing first season in the QSL, FNQ Bulls had a breakout year in 2011, forcing their way into the finals and only being narrowly defeated by their rivals NQ Razorbacks.

This time around coaching staff Peter Tokesi and Tony Panetta have named an extended 21 man squad in an effort to give the Bulls some added depth come the business end of the season. Into the squad come youngsters Paul Ruiz, Stuart and Steven Dunn, Jack Richards and striker Darcy Fernandez.

Most notably the Bulls striking options have been given a boost with 2009 golden boot Steven Cater also resigning for the 2011 season.

Cater joins David Ruiz, Joe Rusch and Fernandez, giving the Bulls a wealth of attacking options.

Along with Angelo Serafin, the Bulls have also lost dynamic flanker George Karoma, who hung up his boots after two seasons in the top flight.

#### Squad:

Jack Richards, Cameron Morrison, Stuart Dunn, Kane Alderton, Bronson Koppen, Joe Rusch, Victor Madrid, Peter McGrath, Nathan Bird, David Ruiz, Steven Cater, Steven Dunn, Alex Plowman, Calum Wood, Shaun Owens, Larry Maggio, Darcy Fernandez, Josh Denittis, Nathan Davis, Steven Dangaard, Paul Ruiz.

**Gold Coast Stars**  
2010 – N/A  
Coach – John Stewart  
Player to Watch – Craig Moore  
Home Ground – Runaway Bay Super Sports Centre

The Razorbacks should once again be well placed in the race for the finals, despite an offseason that's seen them repeatedly forced from training fields due to bad weather.

Thanks to that lack of practice the club should be expected to start the season slowly but with talent in their squad like Lorenzo Sipi it's hard to imagine their fortunes won't improve as the season wears on.

With the loss of the NQ Fury from the A-League the players are sure to have added incentive to prove that northern Queensland have a part to play in Australia's football future.

#### Squad:

Lorenzo Sipi, Branden Holt, Luke Rowell, Guy Bimrose, Robin Edwards, David Han, Ryan Chellingworth, Jacob Crowley, David Bowater, Ben Richardson, Josh Evans, Matthew Look, Lee Mayberry, Jesse Consalvo.

Gold Coast is one of two new teams entering into the QSL this season and as such is a largely unknown quantity.

The club have made a splash with the signing of Craig Moore who will captain the team in its inaugural season.

The preseason form of the Stars has been somewhat disappointing, finishing in last place in the Clem Jones Shield but there were promising signs in their play, particularly in their match against Brisbane Strikers.

With their first match postponed due to bad weather the club is still to announce its finalised squad, but it would be surprising should Gold Coast not at least sit comfortably in mid-table.

#### Possible Squad:

David Chambers, John Costello, Nikki Felizatto, Levi Hilton, Matt Hilton, Dean Smith, Craig Stewart, Simon Wade, Morgan Zeeno, Craig Moore, Nick Hulme, Lewis Marsh, Daniel Gecic, Luke Bekut.

**NQ Razorbacks**  
2010 – 4th  
Coach – Ken Mitchell  
Player to Watch – Lorenzo Sipi  
Home Ground – Brolga Park

The Razorbacks should once again be well placed in the race for the finals, despite an offseason that's seen them repeatedly forced from training fields due to bad weather.

Thanks to that lack of practice the club should be expected to start the season slowly but with talent in their squad like Lorenzo Sipi it's hard to imagine their fortunes won't improve as the season wears on.

With the loss of the NQ Fury from the A-League the players are sure to have added incentive to prove that northern Queensland have a part to play in Australia's football future.

#### Squad:

Rhys Jackson, Tye MacDonald, Jesse McDonnell, Jai Ingham, Matt Stein, Callum Hare, Reggie Davani, Cummings Menapi, Dzenis Tartic, Scott Stewart, Victor Fenehia, Daniel Tresoro, Julian Zullo, Neil Smothers, Alex Davani.

**Queensland Academy of Sport**  
2010 – 5th  
Coach – David Abela

Player to Watch – Kenneth Dougall  
Home Ground – Meakin Park

**Sunshine Coast FC Fire**  
2010 – 1st (Champions)  
Coach – Richard Hudson

Player to Watch – Tyson Holmes  
Home Ground – Stockland Park

After a slow start to the season in 2010 QAS came storming home towards the end and were looking a possibility of finals football but came unstuck with some poor results at the death.

QAS are expected to be one of the more technically adept sides in the competition and should once again prove a handful for other teams. As in seasons past though their lack of size, power and experience will likely prove a hindrance should the opposition look to bully them out of the game.

The Academy has developed a strong working relationship with the Brisbane Roar over the past few seasons and share a number of players, two of which should prove shining lights in the QSL this season. Kenneth Dougall and Matt Acton starred for Brisbane in the National Youth League over the summer sharing Brisbane Player of the Year honours and if they can carry that form in to the QSL it shouldn't be too long until they find themselves signed to A-League clubs.

#### Squad:

Matthew Acton, Alistair Quinn, Neko Vujevich, James Donachie, Scot Coulson, Ross Archibald, Jacob McLean, Kenneth Dougall, Elliott Ronto, Mitch Cooper, Koh Satake, Erwin Buljubasic, Luca Jannese, Kwame Yeboah, Tremayne Sadler, Jayke Cushieri, Ben Litfin, Brandon Borrello.

**Southern Cross United**  
2010 – N/A  
Coach – Josh McCloughan  
Player to Watch – Reggie Davani  
Home Ground – Dittmer Park/Perry Park

Southern Cross United are the other new entrant to the league this season and are still shrouded in mystery as to date they are yet to formally announce a finalised squad.

The club will be coached by ex-Brisbane Roar defender Josh McCloughan, a big ask in his first full coaching appointment.

Aside from the still unknown squad makeup their have been rumours swirling around the club of funding and sponsorship fall throughs whilst also their home ground appears transient, officially listed as Dittmer Park but with reports that the team is set to play out of Brisbane Striker's home ground Perry Park.

Southern Cross participated in the Clem Jones Shield in the pre-season, taking out the competition after the withdrawal of Sunshine Coast. A certain positive in the clubs inclusion in the league should be the expected return of Reggie Davani, the striker who made a significant impact during Logan United's stint in the QSL.

#### Possible Squad:

Brad Moss, Brett Neeve, Corey Hooper, Kyle McBurney, Matt Zappone, Braden Burgess, Zach McLean, Clarke Bradford, Jordan Corte, Jamie White, Jamie Hatch, Tyson Masters, Josh Drinkwater, Troy Mundy, Aaron Craig, Warrick Jansen, Michael Kay, Chase Moloney, Joseph Civello, Sam Petersen, Nelson Burgess, Cameron Jones.

**Whitsunday Miners**  
2010 – 7th  
Coach – Graham Harvey

Player to Watch – Jamie White

Home Ground – Magpies

Just a few short months ago the Miners were facing QSL oblivion but added support from Football Queensland, the Daily Mercury and the Mackay community turned their fortunes around and the club will once again take to the field.

The squad for 2011 has been revamped, keeping together a core of experienced QSL campaigners whilst adding to them a crop of English players including former Southampton juniors Jamie Hatch and Jamie White as well as former Brisbane Striker Jordan Corte.

Coach Graham Harvey has been pleased with the teams undefeated preseason and fully expects the club to be much more competitive in 2010.

**Squad:**  
Brad Moss, Brett Neeve, Corey Hooper, Kyle McBurney, Matt Zappone, Braden Burgess, Zach McLean, Clarke Bradford, Jordan Corte, Jamie White, Jamie Hatch, Tyson Masters, Josh Drinkwater, Troy Mundy, Aaron Craig, Warrick Jansen, Michael Kay, Chase Moloney, Joseph Civello, Sam Petersen, Nelson Burgess, Cameron Jones.

# Surprises mark opening day of league season

By Walter Pless

## TASMANIA

There were a few surprises on the opening weekend of the Forestry Tasmanian Southern Premier League season, with newcomers Beachside drawing 1-1 with Glenorchy Knights at KGV Park on Saturday and reigning champions South Hobart being held to a 2-2 draw by Tilford Zebras at KGV Park on Friday night.

Olympia Warriors' opening of their new ground, Warrior Park, with its artificial surface was spoiled when they lost 2-1 to New Town Eagles on Saturday.

Olympia held their 50th anniversary dinner on Saturday night, but the loss did not dampen the celebrations.

New Town Eagles will celebrate their 50th anniversary in April.

Clarence United, complete with their three South Korean imports, made the perfect start to the season with a 3-1 away win over Kingborough Lions United.

Glenorchy Knights had a goal disallowed in the first half and then fell behind to a Ricky Eaves strike early in the second.

It was not until two minutes from the end that Knights equalised, Alex Holmes heading home Corey Smith's free-kick from the left.

Frenchman, 28-year-old Ma-



Knights' Jackson Marsh (left) tries to intercept Beachside's Ricki Eaves as Knights' new Frenchman Matthieu Gregoire looks on.  
Photo: WALTER PLESS

thieu Gregoire, made a satisfactory debut for Knights but went off with a leg injury near the end.

Olympia had the better of the match against Eagles but lost by the odd goal.

Lee Mason was in excellent

form in midfield for Olympia and even saved a shot on the line to keep his side in contention.

Goalkeeper Nathan Pitchford produced an outstanding display for Eagles and made at least three crucial saves, denying Josh Fielding, Brady Cronk and Mason.

Eagles went ahead through a 21st-minute penalty by Alex Leszczynski after Craig Stockdale had brought down Adam McKeown.

Warren Wadawu almost drew Olympia level, but his low drive came back into play off the base

of the far left-hand post.

Three minutes after the break, Wadawu made amends by equalising from Fielding's pass, but five minutes later, Wadawu shot over the bar when should have worked the keeper.

Jayden Hey fired narrowly over

in the 55th minute, as did Cronk from Fielding's pass in the 59th minute.

Confusion and indecision at the back between keeper Dmitri Nester and defenders Nektan Vavoulas and Stockdale enabled McKeown to tap home the loose ball and restore Eagles' lead.

With 10 minutes remaining, Eagles had Michael Anderson sent off after he collected a second yellow card. This gave Olympia a distinct advantage and Pitchford saved brilliantly from Cronk, after Ben Phillips's low cross from the right.

Olympia had young substitute Harry Woolley sent off in the dying minutes, but the game ended with Pitchford producing a marvellous save from Mason and Eagles defender Adam Bates blocking Nick Meredith's goal-bound shot.

South Hobart appeared to be cruising against Zebras after goals by Greg Downes and new signing Brayden Mann gave them a 2-0 lead at the interval.

But, Zebras somehow revived 15 minutes from the end and goals by Jonathon Ladic and Paul Cairns earned them a 2-2 draw.

Joel Schuth gave Kingborough Lions United a 1-0 lead against Clarence United on the quarter-hour mark, but three goals by the visitors saw Clarence triumph 3-1.

## SA Results

**Carlsberg Cup**  
Semi Final (Winner 1 vs. Winner 2)  
Metro Stars 2 (Monterosso, Matricciani) v Adelaide City 1 (Orr) (HT 1-0)

Best – Metro (Monterosso, Matricciani, Menechella Dav) Adelaide City (M Mullen, Pezos, Halliday)

Quarter Final (Winner 3 vs. Winner 4)  
Raiders 2 (Mackey, Muscroft) v Campbelltown 1 (OG) (HT 2-0)

Best – Raiders (Mackey, Harris, Claridge) Campbelltown (Piotto, Totani Deegan).

**Carlsberg Cup Final**  
**Raiders v MetroStars**  
Hindmarsh Stadium  
Wednesday 16th March Kick Off 7.30pm

**Women's Charity Cup**  
**Adelaide City v Fulham United**  
Kick Off 5.15pm

being awarded the Captain's armband for this year. Despite having several experienced players hanging up the boots at the end of last year (Michael Pirone and Corey Artone), MetroStars have a depth that's as big as the Grand Canyon to their squad and look to be the side to beat this season.

## Kossie To Meet The Terminator In Cup Final

By Nat Adamopoulos

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

It will be a case of ex player facing up to his ex coach in next week's Carlsberg Cup Grand Final in South Australia as David Terminello's MetroStars and John Kosmina's Raiders have won their respective mid week Semi Final matches, earning them a birth in the last preseason match for 2011.

In the first Semi Final played at Pirate Park, Adelaide Croatia Raiders side held off Jason Trimboli's Campbelltown City Red Devils with a good fought out 2:1 victory, with some very strong performances from youngsters Adam Harris, Paul Mackey and Shannon Claridge.

Campbelltown looked threatening in the opening ten minutes of the match, Oliver Totani and Matthew Deegan having a couple of chances to break the ice only to be denied by the Raiders defence of Nic Kuzman, Daniel Hains and that famous name of Craig Johnston.

The pendulum then swung Raiders way with striker Shannon Claridge having several opportunities to put the ball in the back of the net but to no avail.

Hains took a solo run up the park barging his way through the Red Devils defence only to be muscled



MetroStars striker Michael Matricciani in fine form so far this season. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

off the ball by two Devils defenders as he neared the box.

New Devil's signing Joe Wright (ex Galaxy and Adelaide United Youth Team) put in a wreckless tackle soon after earning himself a

yellow card. Just on the half hour some quick reflex action and some could say lucky keeping by Raiders keeper Daniel Atkins prevented Deegan from popping the first goal in the for the game as he managed

to capture the ball between his legs down low.

The Red Devils were relentless in their attack on the goals with another new signing Kosta Mantis hitting the side of the net with his shot.

In the 42nd minute Mackey tried his luck with a long bomb into Campbelltown's keeper, Les Pogliacomi having to stretch and tip the ball over the cross bar. With the game being scoreless as the sides went in for the half time break both sides had their work cut out for them.

Although the Red Devils started the second half with strength their mistakes were their downfall. After a free kick went astray within five minutes of the restart the Raiders pounced, Harris taking the ball down the right side and lofting in a well-timed pass for an oncoming Matthew Muscroft who beat Pogliacomi easily. Mackey's hard work paid off for him as he put away Raiders second goal on the break just two minutes later.

With twenty minutes to go Trimbo brought himself on to inject some firepower for the Red Devils. They got themselves back into the match thanks for to an own goal coming from the feet of the Raiders defence.

Right on the knocker the Devils were unlucky not to take the game to extra time when an opportu-

nity went begging for Mantis as he missed the chance to equalize.

Kosmina (ex Adelaide United coach) has had his stable of young lads playing some very good football to see them unbeaten through to the end of the competition.

The confidence he has had in his mix of older more experienced players like Kuzman, Saric, Muscroft and Barisic with the predominant young gun players has paid off, with the lads stepping up well to the challenges of senior men's football.

Mackey (ex Sydney FC Youth team) has especially been on fire for the Cup tournament and looks to provide some real excitement for spectators in the season proper.

The other Semi Final game was the clash of the 2010 Cup and Super League Champions. David Terminello's MetroStars faced up to Damian Mori's Adelaide City with the Stars pulling off a well played 2:1 victory.

Recently released Adelaide United player Francesco Monterosso scored for Metros as did other ex Adelaide United player Michael Matricciani who has found his former form during this Carlsberg Cup competition. Midfielder Nicholas Orr scored the only goal for Adelaide City.

Terminello's side has definitely been the benchmark so far in 2011, with club stalwart Lee Robertson



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# Balcatta dream start comes to a halt

By Jacon Kagi

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BALCATTAS dream start to the WA State Premier League season came to a halt with a shock 2-1 home loss to Mandurah City.

Under new coach Michael Roki, Balcatta won their first two games and were leading the league until City secured the three points with two goals within the first 27 minutes.

Jeff Bright gave Mandurah the lead 12 minutes in when his attempted cross found its way into the net.

And former Perth Glory defender Ryan Townsend doubled their advantage when he headed home from a corner 27 minutes in. Balcatta came into the match without regular strikers Daniel Niederberger and Ashley Rosindale, but they still threatened and got back into the match when Mo Atak scored just before half-time.

The home side threatened for much of the second half but were unable to break through, giving Mandurah a win that sees them just one point behind top spot. Premier League new boys Bayswater City won 3-1 at Cockburn City to move to the top of the league.

Bayswater were tipped by many as relegation favourites heading

into the season, but haven't lost this season and produced a polished performance against a team they'll possibly be fighting to avoid the drop with come the end of the season.

Damien Catalano put Bayswater in front after seven minutes but Cockburn responded through in-form striker Rory Feely just 12 minutes later.

But Bayswater piled on the pressure for much of the match and were rewarded when Joshua Tumoi gave them the lead with only 13 minutes left, before Gustavo Maralunda wrapped up the three points in injury time.

Perth SC got their season back on track with a convincing 4-2 victory over strugglers Stirling Lions, thanks to an Andreas Oliveira brace.

Perth hadn't won this season heading into the match but comfortably overcame their opponents, a result that leaves Stirling with just one point from three games.

The Lions were on the back foot early and Oliveira capitalised to give Perth a 1-0 lead heading into half-time, before Robert Sciascia doubled the advantage after 53 minutes.

Phil O'Callaghan got a goal back for Stirling but Adam Bachiller restored the two-goal lead in the 73rd minute.

Scotty Muirhead again gave



Cockburn City defender Paul Natale and Bayswater City midfielder Larry Miller in action at Dalmatinac Park. Photo: PETER SIMCOX

the Lions hope when he made the score 3-2 with 13 minutes left, but Oliveira wrapped up the victory just before injury time. Armadale came back from two goals down to earn a thrilling 2-2 home draw against ECU Joondalup.

Joondalup appeared to be cruising to victory when Ian McMurray gave them the lead after half an hour and Andy Higgins made it 2-0 on the stroke of half-time.

But a four-minute double salvo rescued a point for the southern suburbs side. Craig Young gave them hope after 76 minutes before Steve McDonald scored from the penalty spot. Sorrento picked up their first win of the season with a 5-1 thrashing of the NTC, thanks to a Todd Harnwell hat-trick. David Foster and Kyle Moran also scored for Sorrento, while Beyan netted the NTC's only goal.

ing to move out of the relegation zone.

Harnwell, the brother of Sorrento team-mate and former Glory defender Jamie, scored after 26, 58 and 85 minutes to lead his side to a confidence-boosting victory.

Phil O'Callaghan and Kyle Moran also scored for Sorrento, while Beyan netted the NTC's only goal.

## All Flags WA Results

**First Team**  
Cockburn City 1 (Feely 19)  
Bayswater City 3 (Catalano 7, Tumoe 78, Murulanda 90+1);  
Balcatta 1 (Atak 41) Mandurah  
City 2 (Bright 12, Townsend  
27); Sorrento 5 (D Foster 24, T  
Harnwell 26, 58, 85, K Moran 84);  
NTC 1 (Beyan 36); Armadale 2  
(Young 75, McDonald 81p) ECU  
Joondalup 2 (McMurray 32,  
Higgins 44); Perth SC 4 (Oliveira  
29, 89, Sciascia 52, Bachiller 72);  
Stirling Lions 2 (O'Callaghan 66,  
Muirhead 78).

**Reserves**  
Cockburn City 1 Bayswater City  
4; Balcatta 1 Mandurah City 4;  
Sorrento 2 NTC 2; Armadale 1  
ECU Joondalup 6; Perth SC 3  
Stirling Lions 1.

**Under 18's**  
Cockburn City 2 Bayswater City  
1; Balcatta 8 Mandurah City 1;  
Sorrento 1 NTC 1; Armadale 1  
ECU Joondalup 1; Perth SC 2  
Stirling Lions 1.

## All Flags WA Premier League

	P	W	D	L	For	Ag	GD	Pts
1 Bayswater City	3	2	1	0	5	1	4	7
2 Balcatta	3	2	0	1	8	4	4	6
3 Mandurah City	3	2	0	1	4	4	0	6
4 Perth SC	3	1	1	1	5	4	1	4
5 Armadale	3	1	1	1	5	5	0	4
6 Cockburn City	3	1	1	1	4	5	-1	4
7 ECU Joondalup	3	1	1	1	5	7	-2	4
8 Western Knights	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	3
9 Inglewood United	2	1	0	3	2	1	3	7
10 Stirling Lions	3	0	1	2	4	8	-4	1
11 Sorrento	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
12 Floreat Athena	2	0	0	2	2	5	-3	0

# White Eagles Stun Premier League Blue Devils

By Russ Gibbs

## ACT

STATE League Division One side the White Eagles have started the Federation Cup with a bang by stunning Premier League opponents Belconnen United with a merited 3-2 victory at Hawker Football Centre. The Blue Devils were playing catch up for most of an absorbing clash and to compound matters ace striker Danny Macor saw his first-half penalty saved by the White Eagles' stopper.

Dustin Wells did manage to convert a second Belconnen penalty awarded in stoppage time but with the White Eagles already 3-1 up by that stage it was to prove scant consolation and the Division One outfit saw out the remainder of the added time to record a momentous victory.

Woden Valley cruised to victory in the Southside derby seeing off the challenge of Tuggeranong United 4-0 in front of a vociferous crowd at Woden Enclosed. In a match that pitted former Tuggeranong skipper Jeremy Butler against his old team Woden dominated most of the match and deservedly ran out winners. Tom Hirst gave Woden the lead midway through the half before Simon Hinde clipped home a second just before the halftime break.

Chris Ruiz saw a header cleared off the line for Tuggeranong whilst rapid striker Luke Shepherd hit a post but Woden were worthy of their advantage. A tiring Tuggeranong were picked apart towards the end when Hinde claimed his second before Hirst rammed home a stunning fourth as the match reached its conclusion.



Cooma Tigers (gold and black) v Monaro Panthers (green) - Matt Menser (grounded - Panthers) an Alex Castro battle for possession.

Canberra Olympic also started their Pool A campaign with maximum points after defeating a depleted Canberra City 3-1. Striker Yianni Karabalis gave Olympic a 19th minute lead which Euan Peterkin cancelled out six minutes into the second half. James Field restored Olympic's lead in the 66th minute and Domenic Giampaolo made sure that Dean Ugrinic's team went home with the points adding the third goal seventeen minutes from the end of an exciting encounter.

Over in Pool B there was a seven goal thriller between Cooma Tigers and a Monaro Panthers outfit missing up to eight first-team regulars and who could only name thirteen players, including a substitute goalkeeper, on the match card. It was a major surprise therefore when Mario Polegubic struck the opening goal for the Panthers with a stunning left-foot long-range effort. Goran Josifovski equalised for the

Tigers before half-time in what was becoming an exhilarating match.

New signing Alex Castro proved his worth with a header in the 47th minute to give Cooma the lead before another super finish, this time from Elyja Shah, four minutes later had Cooma 3-1 to the good. Jair Wilk chipped in an exquisite fourth, but not before an early contender for miss of the season, the burly striker rolling wide of an empty goal after rounding stranded Panthers custodian Matt McDonald.

Trailing 4-1 the Panthers somehow found some extra reserves of energy and stormed back with two quick goals to leave the Tigers hanging on. Steve Jones tapped in from close range after brilliant approach work by Luke McGrath before Daniel Colbertaldo lofted a through ball over Rade Kosanovic in the Cooma goal to make the score 4-3. The Panthers pushed for a leveller but the Tigers held on.

# Sunshine Coast Fire Wins QSL Grand Final Replay

By Jarrod Ellis

## QUEENSLAND

The first round of QSL 2011 kicked off on Saturday night, the pick of the game a rematch between 2010 Grand Finalists Brisbane Strikers and Sunshine Coast Fire.

The highly anticipated season opener between the two QSL heavyweights was a close affair as expected, a single goal separating the two sides, arriving courtesy of Sunshine Coast's Ryan Delahunt in the 74th minute, securing a hard fought victory for the visitors.

In a scrappy match the early stages were a tight affair, both sides looking to settle into a rhythm before moving forward. Sunshine Coast's Aaron Brazendale posed the most problems early on for Brisbane, testing keeper Brendan White from outside the box before setting up Shaun Blackman for a headed chance.

While the Fire were making the chances the home side weren't entirely out of the game, sending searching balls forward in hope before finally registering a decent chance in the 33rd minute. Michael Angus and Matt Thurtell combining to create an opening for Chay Hewns who attempted to curl a shot around Antony Hall in goal.

The second half proved a similar, if more active, affair. Both sides struggling to create genuine chances, Brisbane having the better of the opportunities early on, Brad McDonald and Ben Griffin both denied goals by an alert Hall. Just as the match looked like



Bulls midfielder Cameron Morrison in action against Brisbane Strikers in their final pre-season game last weekend. Photo: JIM HATCHMAN

deteriorating into a 0-0 draw a mistake from Myles Carseldine gifted Sunshine Coast the lead.

The midfielder played a poor pass in his own half that was intercepted by Fire captain Tyson Holmes. Requiring immediate action Holmes didn't hesitate, sending a pass that found a lurking Ryan Delahunt racing onto goal, the supersub made no mistakes a fired the ball under Brendan White.

Brisbane attempted to surge back into the match but the Sunshine Coast defence held firm and the visitors came away with a valuable 1-0 win.

Elsewhere around the league results were mixed. QAS opened their season against Whitsunday Miners, the visiting north Queenslanders took the lead in the 25th minute courtesy of new signing Jamie White. The advantage didn't last however and only five minutes later Elliott Ronto had equalised for the youngsters,

the first half proving the peak of the entertainment as neither side could find a winner.

At Jardine Park the Capricorn Cougars had a 4-2 defeat inflicted upon them by QSL newcomers Southern Cross United. Reggie Davani was the hero for United, bagging a double that helped hold off the Cougars who staged a comeback midway through the second half, Johnathon Sauer and Jordan Miller bagging goals that ultimately only proved consolation to the Rockhampton club.

The final match of the weekend was a one sided affair, NQ Razorbacks destroying Bundaberg Spirit 4-0 at Martens Oval. The Spirit had no answers as Robin Edwards struck twice in the first 20 minutes, sapping the home side of belief. Josh Evans and David Han completed the rout in the first half, a four goal gap proving too much for the home side to overcome.



# BRISBANE ROAR

## HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE CHAMPIONS 2010/11



PHOTO: ADRIAN GAGLONE



### Match Details

Brisbane Roar 2  
(HENRIQUE 117', Erik PAARTALU 120')  
Central Coast Mariners 2  
(Adam KWASNICK 96', Oliver BOZANIC 102')  
Penalties  
Brisbane Roar 4 (Ivan FRANJIC, Erik PAARTALU, Matt MCKAY, HENRIQUE)  
Central Coast Mariners 2 (John HUTCHINSON, Alex WILKINSON)  
Grand Final  
Sunday, 13 March 2011  
Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane  
Referee: Matthew Breeze  
Crowd: 50,168

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# Saxon Sports EPL Comp

## Round 8 Wrap Up

Arsenal took on Wolverhampton in our Round 8 opener. Arsenal, who are searching for a place in the top 4, were desperate for a win after losing 2 in a row. They came out firing, matching Wolverhampton goal for goal in the first half. But the Wolves kicked away in the second half, winning 6-3 in the end.

The 2nd game of the night was the battle of the bottom teams, Everton v Newcastle. Everton had only won 1 game for the season before tonight's game, with Newcastle only 2 games. In the end, it was Newcastle who got over the line, putting themselves into 4th place of Group B. Everton have the skill to win more games but

lack in team morale, which really shows when they're out on the pitch.

Match of the round tonight has to go to Chelsea v Manchester City. City are a game behind Chelsea so a win tonight would bring them back to par, they would also share top spot with them. Only 2 goals separated the teams as the final siren went, Manchester City coming out on top. According to the referee, the game was one of the best of the tournament, and the cleanest game played so far.

Birmingham thought they had their game in the bag but threw it away with 5 minutes left. They were winning 3-1 against Fulham, but lost their stamina in the final minutes, going

down 6-3. Great comeback by the Fulham boys.

Other results of the round were Tottenham 6 v West Ham 3 and Blackburn 10 v Liverpool 6. Blackburn are still yet to lose a game this season, with 2 games remaining, can anyone beat them?

### Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A Pts
1 Chelsea	8	6	0	2	83	54 24
2 Wolverhampton	7	6	0	1	47	29 24
3 Manchester City	8	5	2	1	58	50 24
4 West Ham	8	3	1	4	45	39 14
5 Arsenal	8	3	1	4	43	45 14
6 Tottenham	8	3	0	5	67	52 12

### Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A Pts
1 Blackburn	8	8	0	0	78	26 32
2 Birmingham	8	5	0	3	54	32 20
3 Fulham	8	4	0	4	55	65 16
4 Newcastle	8	3	0	5	42	51 12
5 Liverpool	8	3	0	5	43	62 12
6 Everton	8	1	0	7	37	73 4

# WAG OF THE WEEK



Zaira Nara Age:25

Insignificant other: Diego Forlan (Atletico Madrid)



## Couch Potato Dept.

\* ALL TIMES ARE AEST



SBS ONE  
Monday March 14th,  
4:30 pm FIFA Futbol Mundial  
11:30 pm The World Game

SBS TWO  
Monday March 14th  
9:30 pm The World Game

Wednesday 16 March  
SBS ONE  
6:30am - LIVE Round of 16 2nd Leg  
Bayern Munich v Inter Milan

SBS TWO  
11:40pm - DELAYED Round of 16 2nd Leg  
Manchester United v Marseille

Thursday 17 March  
SBS ONE  
6:30am - LIVE Round of 16 2nd Leg  
Real Madrid v Lyon  
10:05pm UEFA Champions League Hour  
All the highlights from the UEFA Champions League.

SBS TWO  
8:30pm - DELAYED (Round of 16 2nd Leg)  
Chelsea v FC Copenhagen

Friday March 18th  
6:45 am UEFA Europa League - Live to all areas

Sunday 20th March  
10:30 am UEFA Europa League Highlights - Match highlights.  
11:00 am Les Murray's Football Feature  
12:00 pm UEFA Champions League Magazine  
2:00 pm Nerds F.C.

## FOX SPORTS

### ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

#### WEEK 32

Sat Mar 19	Tottenham v West Ham	11.40 pm
Sun Mar 20	Manchester United v Bolton	1.55 am
Sun Mar 20	Aston Villa v Wolves	1.55 am Viewers Choice
Sun Mar 20	Stoke v Newcastle	1.55 am Viewers Choice
Sun Mar 20	West Brom v Arsenal	1.55 am Viewers Choice
Sun Mar 20	Wigan v Birmingham	1.55 am Viewers Choice
Sun Mar 20	Everton v Fulham	4.25 am
Sun Mar 20	Blackburn v Blackpool	10.30 am (DELAY)
Mon Mar 21	Sunderland v Liverpool	12.25 am
Mon Mar 21	Chelsea v Manchester City	2.55 am

### ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Tues Mar 15	Melbourne v Jeju United	7.30 pm
Wed Mar 16	Kashima v Sydney FC	8.30 pm

### ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Tues Mar 15	Norwich v Bristol City	6.30 am
Sat Mar 19	Chesterfield v Rotherham	6.30 am
Sun Mar 20	Southampton v Sheffield Wednesday	4.00 am

### FOX SPORTS FC

Tues March 15	
6.30 pm	

## one HD

### Monday 14th March

01:00 pm Serie A Matchday 29: Brescia V Inter Milan

### Sunday 15th March

01:30 am Bundesliga (Rpt) Bayern Munich V Hamburg

### Tuesday 15th March

10:30 pm World Football News

11:15 pm Man United V Arsenal [F.A Cup Sixth Round]

### Wednesday 16th March

06:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show

06:30 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

07:30 am World Football News (Rpt)

### Thursday 17th March

04:00 am Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 29: Roma V Lazio

06:00 am Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 29: Brescia V Inter

10:00 am Man United V Arsenal [F.A Cup Sixth Round]

### Friday 18th March

06:00 am Bundesliga (Rpt) Bayern Munich V Hamburg

### Saturday 19th March

01:30 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights (Rpt)

02:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show (Rpt)

03:00 am Man U V Arsenal [F.A Cup Sixth Rd] (Rpt)

06:00 am Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 29: Roma V Lazio

08:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show (Rpt)

### Sunday 20th March

01:25 am LIVE: Bundesliga Freiburg V Bayern Munich

05:00 am Serie A Matchday 30: Lazio V Cesena

### Monday 21st March

01:00 am LIVE: Serie A Inter Milan V Lecce

## SETANTA SPORTS

### Monday 14th March

9:00 Scottish Cup Quarter-Final

- Inverness vs Celtic

10:45am Serie A - Genoa vs

Palermo

2:15pm Blue Square Premier-

Crawley vs AFC Wimbledon

8:55pm J-League - Jubilo Iwata

vs Yokohama F Marinos LIVE

10:55pm SPL - Kilmarnock vs

Motherwell LIVE

### Tuesday 15th March

0:30am Bundesliga - St Pauli

vs Stuttgart

2:15am Serie A - Chievo vs

Fiorentina

4:00am Serie A - Catania vs

Sampdoria

7:10am Portuguese Liga - UD

Leiria vs Porto LIVE

5:15pm League Of Ireland -

Teams TBC

10:25pm Serie A - Fiorentina vs

Roma LIVE

### Wednesday 16th March

0:45am Serie A - Cagliari vs

Udinese

### Thursday 17th March

6:40am SPL - Celtic vs Hibernian LIVE

11:40am Copa Libertadores -

Colo Colo vs Santos LIVE

### Friday 18th March

1:30am Scottish League Cup

Final - Celtic vs Rangers LIVE

5am Bundesliga - Stuttgart vs

Wolfsburg

6:40am Serie A - Napoli vs

Cagliari LIVE

9:00am Serie A - Juventus vs

Brescia

10:45am Serie A - Udinese vs

Catania

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The Green Gully Football Show

Every Saturday

10.30am

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**FULL NAME:** Jesse James Krnceanic  
**BIRTHPLACE:** Duisburg, Germany  
**BIRTH DATE:** 05/09/1984  
**HEIGHT:** 189cm  
**WEIGHT:** 83 kg  
**MARRIED:** No  
**CAR:** Holden Commodore  
**NICKNAME:** JK or Krnca  
**PREVIOUS CLUBS:** Richmond Eagles FC, OJC Rosmalen (Holland), KFC Uerdingen (Germany).  
**REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS:** None yet!  
**CHILDHOOD FOOTBALL HERO:** Zvonimir Boban  
**FAVOURITE O/S PLAYER:** Zlatan Ibrahimovic  
**FAVOURITE HAL PLAYER:** Serge van Dijk  
**FAVOURITE FORMER SOCCEROO:** Eddie Krnceanic  
**FAVOURITE CURRENT SOCCEROO:** Brett Holman  
**MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A PLAYER:** Playing against Bayern Munich in a friendly in Germany. We lost 4-0!  
**MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A FAN:** Anderlecht v Standard - awesome Belgium Cup Final in 1989. 2-1 to Les Mauves  
**MOST MEMORABLE GOAL YOU'VE SCORED:** Chip against Hume last year.  
**EARLIEST FOOTBALL MEMORY:** Kicking the ball around at our apartment aged 4  
**FUNNIEST MOMENT IN FOOTBALL:** Too many to mention  
**BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT:** Not scoring against Bayern Munich  
**WORST INJURY:** Broken elbow  
**MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT:** Bixente Lizarazu  
**FAVOURITE AWAY GROUND:** Northcote's  
**SUPERSTITIONS:** None, thank God!  
**TYPICAL MATCH DAY MEAL:** Pasta and salmon  
**WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS:** My ability to never give up  
**WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES:** Chocolate  
**FAVOURITE TEAM WHEN GROWING UP:** RSC Anderlecht  
**FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTS:** Basket, tennis, athletics  
**FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTSPERSON:** Mike Johnson  
**FAVOURITE FOODS:** Schnitzel, Sashimi, Katsuramen  
**FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS:** Sean Connery  
**HOBBIES:** Chillin' with friends  
**FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT:** Canary Islands  
**FAVOURITE NIGHTSPOT:** Don't have one  
**IDEAL DATE:** Way too hard!!  
**FAVOURITE TV SHOWS:** West Wing, Lost, Modern Family  
**FAVOURITE MUSIC:** I like a bit of everything, but listening to the Jezebels, VXX, Florence and the Machine  
**FAVOURITE FILM:** The Recruit  
**LAST SOCCER SHIRT YOU BOUGHT:** Never bought one  
**FUNNIEST RUMOUR YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT YOURSELF:** That I was left footed  
**BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER:** My Father  
**BIGGEST DRAG IN SOCCER:** Long training sessions  
**FOOTBALL AMBITION:** Winning VPL and Singapore Cup  
**WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET?**: Nelson Mandela  
**YOU'RE TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S HAL:** Roar  
**YOU'RE TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S VPL:** Hellas!



PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON



South Melbourne FC  
**Jesse Krnceanic**

**LONDON CALLING**

With Adam North in the UK

ONE thing is for certain; the 2010-11 English Premier League Title is on its way to either Manchester or London. But which of the title contenders will be celebrating when all the smoke has cleared, all the dust has settled, and the Premier League Champions have lifted that trophy?

Going back a couple of months ago, the conversation as to which team would prove to be the best in England could have raged for several hours, as there were five strong contenders. Fast forward to the beginning of March, and only two remain.

Both Tottenham and Manchester City, new additions to the list of title hopefuls, fell by the wayside without much of a struggle. Chelsea are a little different, as for much of the season they looked like they may be scoring back-to-back titles, yet their capitulation around the turn of the year has probably ended their championship hopes. It's possible they could still force their way back into the hunt, but to be honest I think at this point they simply aren't good enough to catch the leaders up.

That leaves us with two; Arsenal and Manchester United. The two teams that have been fighting tooth and nail against each other for the league since Monseigneur Wenger took over at Arsenal in the late nineties. Both have fierce geographical rivals, which may have stronger hatred connected with them, but no two teams have had as much head-to-head rivalry whilst chasing for the Premier League crown.

So as we look to be heading into the final stretch of games which will decide the Premier League Champs, who out of these two will be celebrating come the last game of the season, and who will be left wondering what might have been.

The team currently in pole position is undoubtedly Manchester United. They sit atop the Premier League, as they have done for several weeks now, and they are currently three points clear of their nearest rivals. However, it has been a difficult couple of weeks for the Red Devils. A narrow defeat to possible contenders Chelsea was followed up with a loss to their most hated rivals Liverpool.

Most perturbing for United fans should be the fact that both of these defeats occurred away from home, continuing the team's poor showing when not at Old Trafford, and also that the Liverpool victory was pretty emphatic. Liverpool were good, United were awful.

And they still have some big games to come later in the season. United still have to play Chelsea again, albeit this time at home, and they are yet to play Arsenal at the Emirates stadium, a game which I will certainly touch on later on. It's undoubtedly important to also mention that United's first league defeat this season occurred against a club in the bottom three of the league, which suggests that, especially away from home, points could be dropped in any game.

The real problem that United have had this season, apart from the fact that quite simply their squad is not as good as it has been in previous years, is that their talisman Wayne Rooney has been shockingly bad. In much the same way that Torres at both Liverpool and Chelsea has looked completely anaemic at times, so has Rooney for United.

On the plus side for them though is that players like Berbatov and Nani have picked up some of the slack left by the England front man, and if they do manage to take the title it will be players like these two that deserve all the accolades.

With United's recent dip in form, or at least in their results, Arsenal have been able to slowly decrease the gap between themselves and United. They are just three points away, with a game in hand, and still have to play their main rivals at home.

And yet things aren't going particularly well for the Gunners either. They are coming off what has been described, at least according to the statistics, as the worst performance in Champions League history, and in their last Premier League game they dropped points at home to Sunderland. And I'm sure most Arsenal fans will be thinking the less said about the Carling Cup final the better.

Much like their North London rivals Tottenham, Arsenal have been ridiculously inconsistent this season. Able to beat teams like Manchester City away and Chelsea at home, yet losing to

# Where is the EPL Title headed?



London or Manchester? So much at stake, but there's only a fine line between success and failure.

Newcastle and West Brom. Their form is almost the reverse of United's, in that away from home the Gunners have been excellent all season, yet at home they have dropped points against Newcastle, West Brom, Sunderland and others. Hardly the home form of serious title challengers.

And yet, they are still serious contenders for the league title. They have three big games left, against Liverpool, United and Spurs, yet two of those are at home, against the other teams that play in red, and if they are able to take seven points from those three games they would launch themselves into being favourites for the championship.

It seems like it could all come down to two things; the remaining games between United and Arsenal, and, as always, injuries and suspensions.

Both teams have had some significant injuries this season. United have been without Rio Ferdinand for much of the year, and in recent games they had to do without his partner at the back Vidic, which didn't go so well for them. If they can get their first choice defensive partnership back up and running, and of course not suspended, it could be a deciding

factor on whether they can take the title.

In North London, the Gunners have also had several key injuries which have hampered their season.

Their main man, Cesc Fabregas, has spent several weeks on the side-lines, as has their main front man Robin Van Persie, as has their main centre back Thomas Vermaelen. Importantly though, the Arsenal squad has managed for the most part to do well in their absence, with players like Samir Nasri and Laurent Koscielny really coming to the fore.

I would like to believe that both squads at this moment should be good enough to cover any late season injuries, though it could be more of a problem for United as they are still involved in the Champions League, which can have drastic effects on player's fitness.

So it seems that the whole season, at least in terms of who will win the league, could boil down to two games between United and Arsenal, one an FA Cup tie at Old Trafford, one a league tie at the Emirates.

As I write this, on the eve of the FA Cup quarter final between the two teams, it's near impossible to predict how both games will go. Even though

United have beaten Arsenal this season, it's hard to argue convincingly that they are vastly superior to the Gunners, and indeed vice-versa.

It is hard to imagine that neither team will drop points before the season comes to a close, which means that the league game between the two could be massively important just from a points perspective. However both games are probably more important for the psychological impact they could have on the respective teams for the rest of the campaign.

Peter Schmeichel, former United goalkeeper and undoubtedly legend of the Premier League, suggested that in 1999, when United completed an amazing treble, when the two teams played in an FA Cup semi-final, if the Gunners had beaten United then they would have gone on to win the league as well. As it was, United won, then went on to take the title and the Champions League as well.

And it's possible that a similar thing could happen here. If Arsenal go to Old Trafford and knock United out of the cup, it could inspire the confidence in them to take both the league title and the FA Cup. Conversely, if United win in the cup, and are able to go

to the Emirates and win, as they did last season, then maybe they will be spurred into winning the league, the cup, and maybe even the Champions League.

Ultimately, at this point in time I don't know many pundits that are openly predicting who will become Premier League Champions in a couple of months. Personally, although I do believe that Arsenal are a better side, I think that in recent years the Gunners have let themselves down on too many occasions to really believe that they are going to win the league. United, with the likes of Giggs and Scholes, who have been there, seen it, done it hundreds of times, will probably just about hang on to the lead in the Premiership, and they'll probably take the FA Cup as well.

For someone that likes to be right most of the time, I wouldn't mind that prediction to be completely wrong. Whatever, if I'm right or wrong, I can say for certain that the two games left to play between these two should be one's to savour. They may not be able to conjure a game like the semi-final of 1999, but with how important both games may be, they might be able to get close.

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## LONDON CALLING




With Leroy Robinson in the UK

WHEN Blackpool FC were promoted last season to the Premier League, every indication was that they would go the way of so many other clubs that had arrived into the top tier via the playoffs.

They are a small club (capacity 16,000 and a bit) and are based in the north-west – an area of the country where there are already six other Premier League (Bolton, Blackburn, Everton, Liverpool, Wigan and Manchester City) clubs trying to compete with the daddy of all Premier League clubs – Manchester United. Add to that the fact it is their first season in the top tier since 1971, and every indication was they'd go down like that other team from the north-west, Burnley.

In all honesty, had I been told in the summer that they would get relegated tears of joy would have been shed. Let's be honest, who needs another small northern club in the richest league in the world? Six months or so into the season those tears would be of anguish. Blackpool has lit up the league. For those who been under a rock for six months, here are three reasons we should all be rooting for the tangerines to beat Blackburn at Ewood Park next week and, in the long term, stay up.

### Ian Holloway Hates Draws

Manager Ian Holloway doesn't put much value in drawing football matches. His theory is that if going unbeaten in a season means drawing all 38 Premier League games, the 38 points would probably not be enough to stay up.

Winning 13 games and losing 25 might not seem as sexy as going unbeaten, but it's more likely to ensure Premier League survival.

At the present time, Blackpool have 32 points from 29 games with record of won 9,

drawn 5 and lost 15, so are well on course not only to stay up but to win those 13 games they need to ensure survival.

### Blackpool Plays Very Attractive Football

Due to the aforementioned philosophy, it's no surprise that Blackpool have shipped 58 goals in 29 games. More surprisingly, they have 'only' scored 43 goals in that time. That's one and a half per game. Well, bear in mind this figure is more than Tottenham Hotspur (41), Liverpool (39), Everton (38), and Aston Villa (37) and nearly on a par with third placed Manchester City (45).

The biggest problem with Blackpool is exactly the thing that makes them watchable – unpredictability. They are just as liable to lose 4-0 as they are to win 4-0. Take their first game in the premier League – an away fixture to Wigan.

They won 4-0. The next weekend they went to the Emirates and lost 6-0. They have been involved in just one goalless draw – away to West Ham.

Their last 10 games have seen them win twice, draw once and lose seven times. In that time they've scored 16 goals and conceded 26. With Blackpool the impression one gets is that there are no in-betweens, it is either feast or famine. It's all so unpredictable and isn't that just great for the league?

Oftentimes they'll break every rule in the (unwritten) book for promoted clubs by playing 4-2-4 or 4-3-3 away from home, even against the big clubs. They also play passing football so whether you measure entertainment by goals or attacking intent, Blackpool is the real deal.

### Ian Holloway is the Most Quotable Manager in the League

# Three Reasons to Cheer Blackpool FC



Ian Holloway's Blackpool have brought much colour to the EPL this season, both on and off the field.

All you have to know about Holloway is that after getting fired by Milan Mandaric (one of his many victims) in 2005 he took time out to publish his own book of quotes called *Let's Have Coffee: The Tao of Ian Holloway*.

And when a BBC sport reporter asked in October 2010 "Ian, do you have any injury worries?" He replied, "No, I'm fully fit thank you".

One his most famous quotes came after a scrappy win against Chesterfield, when he compared it to pulling an ugly woman after a night out. "Our performance today would have been not the best looking bird but at least we got her in the taxi...we ended up taking [her] home..."

In reply to a question sent in to four-four-two magazine Holloway explained that his reputation as being a funny interviewee wasn't something he set out to do.

"...most of it comes from the fact that I get the same ques-

tions over again. When I started I used to worry about what I said, but that's all bullshit, all you've got to do is be yourself. What you see is what you get. I don't practice [sic] any lines, I don't write speeches, I just go with the flow. Some managers are scared stiff and have a pole up their arse and that's all rubbish. They're too scared to be themselves. I'm me. And that's it".

As you may expect, his opinions and personality mean he can be a polarising figure. Some people have written that he is an idiot, and others that he is the funniest man in football. There are so few personalities in football, especially that breed who say what's on their mind, that it would be great to see Holloway and Blackpool back for another season. Of course it won't last much beyond that because a bit like the seaside town, the rollercoaster ride has to end sometime.

### Are Arsenal the New Tottenham?

Arsenal's sole chance of silverware is the league title. A promising season has been brought to its knees by their annual propensity to choke during the latter stages of a campaign. Their lack of a killer instinct was shown up again in the FA Cup at Old Trafford so it has to be asked: Are Arsenal the new Spurs? Tottenham fans were always known for their optimism, some of which bordered on delusion. At the start of every season the same question would be asked: *Is this finally the year Spurs win something?*

Each season the pundits would pick Spurs out as an up and coming young team who will finally fulfil their potential and win something.

When they didn't the excuses were that the team was young and that indeed, next year they will have more experience and therefore be in with a better chance. Sound familiar?

Well, for Arsenal, the time is

now. Beaten by a very average Manchester United side, they can still redeem themselves from what has turned into a shocking case study in capitulation.

This year has proved that it isn't so much that Arsenal have gotten better, as it is United and Chelsea have gotten worse. Throw in Manchester City, who play like strangers one week and title contenders the next, and a Spurs side that cannot score goals and it leaves us with an Arsenal side with a clear run at the title.

That is in theory, of course. Whereas expectations for Spurs are a top four finish and a decent cup run, for Arsenal nothing less than winning a trophy will suffice this season if Wenger is to keep the good faith of fans starved of success for too long.

If they end up winning nothing when their rivals are faltering, they will have outdone Spurs in the worst possible way.

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# Man Utd dump Arsenal out of FA Cup

**F.A Cup**

The sixth round of the F.A Cup this week saw Bolton overcome Birmingham away in a five goal encounter, but the match of the draw saw Arsenal fall to the might of Manchester United at the Theatre of Dreams.

Bolton ended the chances of Birmingham adding more silverware to the Carling Cup trophy they won last week with a 3-2 win at St Andrew's. Bolton took the lead through Johan Elmander on 21 minutes but thanks to a goal from Cameron Jerome on 38 minutes the sides went in at half time dead-locked.

On the 66th minute Kevin Davies slotted a penalty and that looked to be enough for Bolton but in an exciting final ten minutes, when Kevin Phillips levelled once again in the 80th minute to continue the goal-for-goal nature of the match.

However, Birmingham did not have enough time to respond to Lee Chung-Yong's stoppage time winner, sending Bolton to a semi final at Wembley.

Meanwhile, at Old Trafford an injury plagued Manchester United comfortably disposed of an Arsenal side that was also lacking their potent captain, Cesc Fabregas, as well as any more chance of achieving silverware this season.

United, in what was supposed to be the most entertaining and contested game of the round, outplayed The Gunners 2-0 thanks to goals from Fabio da Silva in the 28th minute and Wayne Rooney in the 49th.

The depth of the Red Devils showed here as their injury list had now taken Darren Fletcher and Michael Carrick from the starting XI as well as Nani, Rio Ferdinand, Park Ji-Sung, Antonio Valencia, Michael Owen, Jonny Evans, Anderson and Owen Hargreaves.

Manchester United will travel to Wembley for a semi final berth in hopes of another F.A Cup.

**Bundesliga**

In the Bundesliga overnight Bayern Munich demolished Hamburg as did Koln to Hanover, but the biggest surprise was Dortmund's first loss in



Man Utd produce a clinical display to reach the FA Cup semi-final and send Arsenal out of their third cup competition in a fortnight.

**weeks to the hands of Hoffenheim.**

Munich romped Hamburg 6-0 thanks to an Arjen Robben hat-trick, finished off with goals from Franck Ribery, Thomas Muller and an own goal from Heiko Westermann summing up Hamburg's night.

From a 6-0 win to a shock 1-0 loss; that is what league leaders Dortmund experienced overnight. Vedad Ibisevic scored on 63 minutes for Hoffenheim what was to be the winner in Dortmund's third loss of the season in an incredible upset.

Elsewhere, Koln defeated Hannover 4-0, Schalke defeated Frankfurt 2-1, Werder Bremen drew 1-1 with Monchengladbach, Nurnberg defeated Wolfsburg 2-1 and Kaiserslautern overcame Freiburg 2-1.

**Ligue 1**

In France overnight Marseille overcame second placed Rennes and Lyon defeated Sochaux, both results setting up a very interesting ending to the Ligue 1 season.

Fourth placed Marseille travelled to Rennes where they needed a win to help secure a Europa League spot, and that they did with a brave 2-0 win. The loss for Rennes means that they have lost touch with Lille, who has a game in hand. Even though they are

level on points for the moment, it is a dangerous loss for the second placed side.

Lyon also travelled away this week to Sochaux and like Marseille; they comfortably won 2-0 which kept them level with Marseille in third spot, and due to Rennes loss, only one point adrift of the second placed side.

Elsewhere in France Arles Avignon drew 3-3 with Lorient, Toulouse defeated Lens 1-0, Nancy defeated Caen 2-0, Nice defeated Auxerre 1-0 and Saint Etienne defeated Stade Brest 2-0.

**La Liga**

There were just three games played in Spain overnight with Real Madrid hosting Hercules, Atletico Madrid travelling to Almeria and Real Zaragoza demolishing Valencia in what could be the upset of the season.

Firstly, Real Madrid kept up the pace with leaders Barcelona after a 2-0 win over Hercules thanks to a brace from Karim Benzema, one in the 24th and then again in the 56th. The win kept them within four points of Barca for 24 hours, but it all seems futile for Madrid now as Barca look to take out the title again.

In the surprise packet of the week, 17th placed Zaragoza demolished third placed Valencia in a 4-0 romping. The 14 places

between the sides did not deter Zaragoza from handing down the amazing defeat.

For Zaragoza, the win puts them out of relegation zone contention for the time being as they jump to 14th spot. In the other match, Atletico Madrid drew 2-2 with Almeria.

**Serie A**

The two games in Italy's Serie A last night both ended in lack-lustre draws, with Inter travelling to Brescia and Juventus to Cesena.

However dull the results were, they did have an impact on the table for the time being. Inter drew with Brescia 1-1, which caused a huge set back for the second placed side as a win would have put them within two points of rivals and league leaders, AC Milan.

Through the draw they can only manage to stay within four, and that could jump to seven points if Milan defeat Bari at the San Siro. Effectively, the poor result could put them out of contention for the Scudetto.

Juventus drew 2-2 at Cesena and although the result has no impact on the top four situation, it has hindered Juve's last ditch chances of qualifying for Europa.

## Asian Scene with Daniel Iaconis

**Japan**

Due to the devastating earthquake and tsunami, which have ravaged most of northern part of Japan, all of this week's J-League fixtures have been postponed.

Following on from last weeks games and Vissel Kobe managed to beat a 10-man Urawa Reds 1-0 thanks to a brilliant free kick by Brazilian Popo in the 76th minute. The Red's were reduced to 10 men after captain Keita Suzuki was shown his second yellow card of the match in the 62nd minute.

Elsewhere Kashima Antlers and Omiya Ardija played out an entertaining 3-3 draw with the Antlers needing to equalise three times to take a point thanks to an own goal in injury time

**Korea**

Last Sunday saw reigning champions Seoul FC host their rivals the Suwon Bluewings at the Seoul World Cup Stadium, and it was the Bluewings who took the bragging rights over their great rivals with a 2-0 win away boosting their ambitions of reclaiming the Korean title. Suwon opened up the scoring in the 40th minute when Uzbek striker Alexander Geynrikh found the back of net in his debut for Suwon; Jang Eun Oh sealed the win in the 60th minute with his goal.

Elsewhere on Sunday Jeju United made a winning start to the season with a 2-1 win over Busan I'Park at home. The visitors took the lead early in the first half when Hee Do Park scored in the 12th minute but

goals either side of half-time from Santos and Ki Jong Bae sealed the points for Jeju. In other games played in the opening round Jeonbuk FC were beaten at home 1-0 by Chunnam Dragons while Ulsan Hyundai Horang were also beaten at home 2-1 by Daejon Citizen. Week 2 of the K-League kicked off Saturday with Suwon defeating Gwangju 2-1 at home. It wasn't all easy work for the hosts who went 1-0 down early in the 3rd minute from a Kim Dong-Sub goal, but a brace from Croatian Mato Neretljak late in the game saw Suwon overcome Gwangju and take all three points.

Defending champions Seoul FC's title defence looks to be stalling after they were held to a 1-1 draw away to Daejon

Citizen. Citizen took the lead in the 14th minute when Wagner scored and were unlucky to concede an own in the 37th minute when Jae-Hun Hwang put the ball into his own net. Elsewhere on Saturday Incheon United and Jeju United played out a scoreless draw while ACL champions Seongnam Illhwa were beaten 1-0 at home by Jeonbuk Motors. Sunday sees Busan I'Park host Sangju Sangmu, with Sangmu potentially joining Suwon atop the K-League ladder if they win, Daegu host Gangwon, Pohang Steelers travel to Chunnam Dragons and Gyeongnam host Ulsan Horang-i.

## UK Results

The FA Cup  
Birmingham 2-3 Bolton  
Man Utd 2-0 Arsenal

Npower Championship  
Burnley 0-3 Millwall  
Coventry 0-1 Hull  
Derby 2-1 Swans  
Leeds 0-0 Ipswich  
Nott's Forest 0-0 Doncaster  
Portsmouth 0-0 Middlesbrough  
QPR 2-1 Crystal Palace  
Scunthorpe 0-3 Leicester  
Watford 3-0 Sheff Utd

Npower League One  
Bournemouth 1-3 Southampton

Brighton 2-0 Tramore  
Bristol Rovers 0-1 Huddersfield  
Charlton 0-1 Brentford  
Colchester 1-3 MK Dons  
Hartlepool 2-0 Plymouth  
Leyton Orient 1-0 Oldham  
Peterborough 0-6 Carlisle  
Rochdale 0-1 Exeter  
Sheff Wed 0-1 Notts County  
Swindon 1-1 Dag & Red  
Yeovil 1-1 Walsall

Npower League Two  
Cheltenham 1-2 Aldershot  
Crewe 2-0 Chesterfield  
Gillingham 3-1 Accrington Stanley  
Hereford 1-2 Barnet  
Lincoln City 2-1 Southend  
Morecambe 0-1 Bradford  
Northampton 0-1 Macclesfield  
Port Vale 1-2 Oxford Utd  
Rotherham 0-0 Burton Albion  
Stockport 0-0 Shrewsbury  
Torquay 5-0 Shrewsbury  
Wycombe 0-1 Stevenage

Blue Square Bet Premier  
AFC Wimbledon 1-2 Kidderminster  
Fleetwood Town 1-2 Crawley Town  
Forest Green 2-3 Barrow  
Kettering 1-2 Grimsby  
Newport County 2-1 Altrincham  
Southport 1-1 Cambridge Utd  
Tammworth 2-3 Hayes & Yeading  
Wrexham 1-1 Rushden & D'monds  
York 1-0 Eastbourne Boro

Scottish Cup  
Brechin 2-0 St Johnstone  
St Mirren 1-1 Aberdeen

Scottish Football League Championship  
First Division  
Dundee 2-1 Queen of South  
Falkirk 1-2 Dunfermline  
Raith Rovers 0-2 Partick Thistle

Scottish Football League Championship  
Second Division  
Ayr 1-0 Alloa  
East Fife 3-0 Forfar

Scottish Football League Championship  
Third Division  
Aberthaw 2-1 Berwick  
Elgin 2-3 Annan Athletic  
Montrose 0-2 Albion  
Queen's Park 3-3 Stranraer

Playing overnight  
AC Milan v Bari  
Cagliari v Udinese  
Catania v Sampdoria  
Chievo v Fiorentina  
Genoa v Palermo  
Lecce v Bologna  
Parma v Napoli

**EPL**

P	GD	Pts
1 Man Utd	29	33
2 Arsenal	28	30
3 Man City	29	20
4 Chelsea	28	27
5 Tottenham	28	7
6 Liverpool	29	3
7 Bolton	29	2
8 Sunderland	29	-2
9 Everton	29	0
10 Newcastle	29	3
11 Fulham	29	1
12 Stoke	29	-6
13 Aston Villa	29	-13
14 Blackburn	29	-12
15 Blackpool	29	-15
16 West Brom	29	-15
17 Birmingham	28	-12
18 West Ham	29	-13
19 Wolves	29	-15
20 Wigan	29	-23

**Bundesliga**

P	GD	Pts
1 Borussia Dortmund	26	38
2 Bayer Leverkusen	25	19
3 Hannover 96	26	1
4 Bayern Munich	26	24
5 Mainz	25	9
6 Nuremberg	26	8
7 SC Freiburg	26	-3
8 Hamburg	26	5
9 TSG Hoffenheim	26	5
10 Cologne	26	-8
11 Schalke 04	26	-1
12 Eintracht Frankfurt	26	-10
13 Werder Bremen	26	-18
14 FC Kaiserslautern	26	-8
15 St Pauli	25	-16
16 Wolfsburg	26	-9
17 VfB Stuttgart	25	-4
18 Borussia M'gladbach	26	-22
Bayern Munich 6-0 Hamburg		
FC Kaiserslautern 2-1 SC Freiburg		
Schalke 04 2-1 Eintracht Frankfurt		
TSG Hoffenheim 1-0 Borussia Dortmund		
Werder Bremen 1-1 Borussia M'gladbach		
Wolfsburg 1-2 Nuremberg		
Cologne 4-0 Hannover 96		

**Serie A**

P	GD	Pts
1 AC Milan	28	30
2 Inter Milan	29	23
3 Napoli	28	16
4 Lazio	28	12
5 Udinese	28	20
6 Roma	28	4
7 Juventus	29	6
8 Palermo	28	-1
9 Cagliari	28	5
10 Fiorentina	28	3
11 Bologna	28	-5
12 Genoa	28	-5
13 Chievo	28	-2
14 Sampdoria	28	-7
15 Catania	28	-14
16 Parma	28	-11
17 Cesena	29	-15
18 Lecce	28	-19
19 Brescia	29	-13
20 Bari	28	-27
Cesena 2-2 Juventus		
Brescia 1-1 Inter Milan		
Playing overnight		
AC Milan v Bari		
Cagliari v Udinese		
Catania v Sampdoria		
Chievo v Fiorentina		
Roma v Lazio		

**SPL**

P	GD	Pts
1 Celtic	28	44
2 Rangers	26	35
3 Hearts	28	17
4 Kilmarnock	28	9
5 Dundee Utd	27	2
6 Motherwell	29	-7
7 Inverness CT	29	2
8 Hibernian	29	-14
9 St Johnstone	28	-16
10 Aberdeen	29	-16
11 St Mirren	28	-23
12 Hamilton	29	-33

**La Liga**

P	GD	Pts
1 Barcelona	27	65
2 Real Madrid	28	47
3 Valencia	28</	



# V-LEAGUE

## PREMIERSHIP

### Round 18

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## 2010 Champs Fitzroy FC end PVFC's dream run

By Peter Parthimos & Matt Montgomery

### Nth Melb v CF Brunswick

**UPDATE:** North Melbourne FC is back after putting away CF Brunswick in an entertaining affair. Nth didn't have it all their own way, with CFB kicking the 1st and keeping the contest tight. 3 goals to M.Pedic & B.Polatti set up the victory after a lack luster 1st half. Overall, a good spectacle, with Nth coming home strong in the end. 8 goals to 2 was the final result.

#### GOALS:

NMFC: M. Pedic 3, B. Polatti 3, A. Jankovic 1, J. Barrientos 1  
CFB: M. Nyadzayo 1, R. Roslan 1

### FC Prahran v Hume FC

**UPDATE:** In what seemed another run of the mill for Hume FC after 2 massive wins. FC Prahran came to play and play well they did, with Maxi Avram bagging a brace and rattling Con Makris's crossbar on 3 occasions. But it wasn't to be as Hume FC capitalized on their opportunities with Michael Dixon slotting away 2 goals to nail down a big win for Hume FC. 5 – 4 in the end as Hume FC creep closer to the top.

#### GOALS:

FCP: M. Avram 2, B. Armstrong 1, M. Alghorabi 1  
HFC: M. Dixon 2, M. Tankir 1, R. Culculoglu 1, C. Mogoai (Own Goal)

### Brimbank FC v Ashburton FC

**UPDATE:** Brimbank FC went down in a ripper as Ashburton FC found some form in the 3rd clash of the night. James Blackburn's 4 goals was the difference in the end as Ashburton steam rolled a deflated Brimbank outfit. Brimbank FC fined themselves in the relegation battles and with 4 games remaining there are no easy games. Ashburton will look to finish strong as the FOZ Cup is nearing. 7 – 4 win to Ashburton FC in the end.

#### GOALS:

BFC: A. Kablar 2, F. Causevic 1, A. Emeti 1  
AFC: J. Blackburn 4, L. Correa 2, Rodrigo 1

### Fitzroy FC v Pascoe Vale FC

**UPDATE:** The 2010 Champions Fitzroy FC became the 1st team to defeat the "would be 2010-11 Champions" Pascoe Vale FC in what will



Pascoe Vale FC huff and puff but fail to register a result in a classical premiership clash.



Andre Caro in the middle of the Golden Lions of Fitzroy FC



Haider Noor with 2 match winning goals makes his V-LEAGUE return against his old Club PVFC



Vadim Mazurskiy: PVFC's 16 game winning streak comes to an end to the hands of the 2010 Champions Fitzroy FC

be remembered as one of the classic matches of the 2010-11 season. Pascoe Vale FC races off to a 3 goal lead, that lead was diminished with 4 unanswered goals as Fitzroy looked like the Fitzroy FC of old with counter attack after counter attack. Haider Noor's influential 2 goals made for an impressive debut for FFC. With Noor taking to the field in the yellow of Fitzroy it marked his 5th appearance for a V-League Club in 6 seasons. A massive win in the end for the Champions. stopping PVFC's unbeaten run. 8 – 7 in the end. Pascoe Vale has 5 games remaining and must win at least 3 to ensure they clinch their 2nd premiership.

#### GOALS:

FFC: F. Hossain 2, S. Rashidi 2, H. Noor 2, I. Arjomand 2  
PVF: J. Da Silva 4, A. Caro 3

### Metropolitan FC v FC Essendon

**UPDATE:** After seeing PVFC go down, Metropolitan FC warmed to the fact that they still have a chance of lifting their first V-League premiership. FC Essendon came back from a 6 – 0 deficit & looked like closing the gap, however the Incredible Ivan Zilic turned it on with 5 classical Zilic goals to skip away & end all hopes of an FCE upset. Big win, 13 – 5 as the sky blues wish of a PVFC lapse, it may just not be that unrealistic?

#### GOALS:

Metro FC: I. Zilic 5, J. Avdic 3, D. Redzepovic 2, T. Grgic 2, R. Castro 1  
FCE: A. Stevanovic 3, L. Erakovic 1, B. Lojanica 1

### FC Collingwood v Mickleham

**UPDATE:** In a night of upsets FC Collingwood overcame Mickleham FC in style. MFC paid the price for not taking FCC seriously, with Apostolakis on the field & Big Bazza in goals, the formula for another upset was evident as FCC took control & never looked back. FCC has been poor, but on the night they played well enough to beat another potential State League team. 7 – 5 in the end as FCC now 3 points behind fellow strugglers Brimbank.

#### GOALS:

FCC: D. Nichiforencu 4, C. Holmes 2, A. Badawy 1  
Mick FC: D. Bosniak 1, M. Nguyen 1, R. Najdovski 1, C. Apostolakis 1, C. Yang 1

## V-League

P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1	Pascoe Vale FC	17	16	0	1	148	57	91
2	Metropolitan FC	18	13	1	4	152	80	72
3	Nth Melbourne FC	17	13	0	4	98	60	38
4	Ashburton FC	18	11	2	5	109	94	65
5	Hume FC	18	10	2	6	99	79	20
6	Fitzroy FC	18	8	2	8	83	105	22
7	FC Essendon	18	6	3	9	96	118	21
8	FC Prahran	18	6	0	12	80	114	34
9	Mickleham FC	18	5	2	11	105	111	6
10	CF Brunswick	18	5	1	12	78	116	38
11	Brimbank FC	18	4	0	14	65	108	43
12	FC Collingwood	18	3	1	14	58	129	71

### Round 18 Results

Wed March 9th

•6:30 CF Brunswick v Nth Melbourne FC	2 - 8
•7:15 FC Prahran v Hume FC	4 - 5
•8:00 Brimbank FC v Ashburton FC	4 - 7
•8:45 Pascoe Vale FC v Fitzroy FC	7 - 8
•9:30 FC Essendon v Metropolitan FC	5 - 13
•10:15 FC Collingwood v Mickleham FC	7 - 5

### Round 19 Clashes

Wed March 16th

•6:30 FC Prahran v Mickleham FC TBA	
•7:15 Fitzroy FC v Metropolitan FC	
•8:00 FC Essendon v Nth Melbourne FC	
•8:45 Pascoe Vale FC v Hume FC	
•9:30 FC Carlton v Ashburton FC	
•10:15 CF Brunswick v Brimbank FC	

## State League Championship

P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1	FC Melbourne	16	14	0	2	81	46	35
2	FC Balwyn	15	10	2	3	109	68	41
3	FC Footscray	16	9	1	6	95	69	26
4	Elsternwick FC	15	9	1	5	90	74	16
5	Albert Park FC	16	7	1	8	94	98	4 - 2
6	FC Carlton	16	6	1	9	88	89	-1
7	FC Geelong	16	6	0	10	70	73	-7
8	Melb Uni FC	16	6	0	10	66	100	-34
9	Doncaster FC	14	4	0	10	75	107	-32
10	Bentleigh FC	16	4	0	12	81	125	-44

### State League Championship Season Round 16 Sun Mar 6th

•7:40 FC Carlton v FC Balwyn	4 - 5
•8:20 Doncaster FC v Bentleigh FC	11 - 8
•9:00 Elsternwick FC v Albert Park FC	6 - 12
•9:40 FC Carlton v Bentleigh FC	4 - 5
•10:20 Elsternwick FC v Doncaster FC	2 - 9

### State League Championship Season Round 17 Sun Mar 13th

•7:40 FC Geelong v FC Balwyn
•8:20 Melb Uni FC v FC Melbourne
•9:00 FC Footscray v Albert Park FC
•9:40 FC Carlton v Bentleigh FC
•10:20 Elsternwick FC v Doncaster FC

## State League Top Scorers

1.Rob Zadwany FCB	43 goals
2.Peter Kratik FFC	37 goals
3.Matt Italiano FCB	27 goals

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## BENTLEIGH GREENS



1

## OAKLEIGH CANNONS



3

## Match Details

Bentleigh Line-up: Kile KENNEDY (GK), Thomas MATHEWS, Stephen DOWNES, Steve LAURIE, Ryan DAVIDSON, Wayne WALLACE, Sean McILLROY, Hayden DOYLE, Scott BULLOCH (Adam FADLJEVIC 72'), Aron WILFORD (C), Jack WEBSTER.

Unused Subs: Luke GAVALAS, Craig SMART, James McGARRY, Declan KEOGH.

Yellow Cards: Davidson 52', Laurie 86'.

Goals: Bulloch 46'.

Oakleigh Line-up: Peter ZOIS (C, GK), Ramazan TAVSANCIOGLU, James CUMMING, Anthony BRAN, Luke WALKER, Frankie LAGANA, James ROBINSON, Stephen HATZIKOSTAS (Aristidis DRAKOS 63'), Dane MILOVANOVIC, Bonel OBRADOVIC, Craig GOODWIN, Ricky DIACO (Bill DAMIANOS 74').

Unused Subs: Daniel NEE-SHAM, Melvin BECKET.

Yellow Cards: Milovanovic 86' Goodwin 90+3'.

Goals: Lagana 15', Diaco 26', Damianos 90+4'.

# Cannons Outclass Gritty Greens

By Rory Flanagan

The Oakleigh Cannons have maintained their unbeaten start to the 2011 Alanic Victorian Premier League season at the expense of the Bentleigh Greens at Kingston Heath Soccer Complex with a 3-1 victory on Friday night.

Kile Kennedy was in goal for the Greens in place of the suspended Peter Gavalas, while Aron Wilford had the Captain's armband. Oakleigh named an unchanged starting lineup from their clash against with VTC on Monday night.

Dane Milovanovic had the first opportunity of the match. Collecting James Robinson's diagonal ball, he struck an effort at goal from 14 yards but was denied by Kile Kennedy who advanced early off his line to close down the angle.

One of Oakleigh's best performers to date, Anthony (Brian) Bran nearly put his side behind ten minutes in after misjudging and heading the ball against his own post.

After getting on the scoresheet with a free kick against White Eagles, Frankie Lagana opened the scoring in the same fashion. 35 yards out, he lofted a high ball at goal which Kennedy completely misjudged and it sailed straight over him into the top corner.

Lagana was a man on fire and with 26 minutes played, he dazzled his way down the right flank before squaring to Ricky Diaco who slotted home his first goal of the campaign with a composed finish past Kennedy.

With the confidence of three goals in two games, Lagana again tried his luck with a free kick from distance but fired wide of the far post. Bentleigh's tenacious midfield was being forced to chase the ball around the park as Oakleigh looked sharp and assured in possession. With almost a carbon copy of their second goal, the Cannons nearly increased their lead. Hatzikostas nutmegged his way toward the by-line and hit a low cross to Diaco, but the big man mis-kicked and the chance was gone.

Struggling to manufacture opportunities, the Greens came close through Stephen Downes. Scott Bulloch whipped in a dangerous cross towards the penalty spot which Downes controlled well on the bounce. He waited for his de-

fender to commit to one side, before cracking an effort at the near post which drew a strong save from Peter Zois.

As the first half drew to a close, Stephen Hatzikostas optimistically launched a shot from distance but couldn't find right direction and sent it high and wide.

Bentleigh must have had a special flavour for their half time drinks as they equalised in the opening play from kickoff. Wayne Wallace surged into the penalty area before cutting the ball back to Scott Bulloch who was on hand the slot the ball past Zois' despairing dive. The same three players were involved in the next noteworthy passage of play, Zois with a superb double save to deny first Scott Bulloch, and then Wayne Wallace's follow-up.

Ari Drakos replaced Hatzikostas in the 63rd minute and slotted in at his preferred left back position with Milovanovic moving into the midfield as Arthur Papas looked to sure things up in defence.

Frankie Lagana again threatened from distance, rifling an effort towards the top corner only for Kile Kennedy to acrobatically tip the ball behind.

Wayne Wallace has become an integral part of the Greens line-up already this season. Always behind the ball when in defence and the first to push forward in attack, he is the classic box to box midfielder and if not for his efforts, Bentleigh would have not been able to battle their way back into the contest.

For all their pressure in the second period, Bentleigh were unable to find an equaliser. Aron Wilford surprised everyone when he swiftly but casually stepped up and drilled a low free kick agonisingly wide of the upright while the Oakleigh defence were still organising themselves.

On as a substitute, veteran Billy Damianos chipped a ball up to Milovanovic who audaciously attempted a Paul Scholes-esque volley but sent it miles wide of the target.

With Bentleigh desperately pressing forward and pushing up in search of an equaliser, Oakleigh sealed the win with the last play of the game. Unmarked Billy Damianos was left with a simple tap in to wrap up all three points for the visitors.



Oakleigh keeper, Peter Zois, under pressure to collect the ball under pressure from five players. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Frankie Lagana commented on his side's unbeaten start to the season "the squad only came together two weeks really, before the season, so it's great to get the wins as it helps

team camaraderie."

He added "Oakleigh have been on top halfway through the season and dropped off for the last three years so we need to keep going."

Oakleigh take on South Melbourne on Friday night in what shapes to be a massive clash, while Bentleigh travel to Knights Stadium to take on the Melbourne Knights.



James Robinson (centre) and Dane Milovanovic (right) have a spirited discussion with Steve Laurie and Ryan Davidson (16). Photo: JOHN PUNSHON



Billy Damianos has just scored the sealer, much to the dismay of Kile Kennedy. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS



3

ST ALBANS SAINTS



2

## Match Details

**GREEN GULLY LINE UP:**  
 1. Nikola ROGANOVIC, 2. Daniel JONES, 4. Cameron DRAKE, 7. Jeffrey FLEMING, 8. Jason HAYNE, 9. Brent FISHER, 10. Graham HOCKLESS, 12. Matthew SANDERS, 14. Ryan OLLERTON, 16. Mile MEDJEDOVIC, 17. Andrew VARGAS.

**Subs:** 6. Michael ANDERSON, 11. Pasquale VIZZARI, 15. Hamid BASMA, 19. Jonathon MUÑOZ, 23. Mason INTERLANDI.

**Goals:** Drake 29', Vargas 32', Fisher 55'.

**Yellow cards:** Vizzari

**ST ALBANS SAINTS LINE-UP:**  
 20. Ante LONCARIC 4. Maks CUZE, 5. Brian CHESSON, 7. Goran JOZELJIC, 8. Liam CANNELL, 9. Josip LONCARIC, 16. Tomislav USKOK, 17. Daniel VISEVIC, 18. Stefan PIORKOWSKI, 19. Michael GRGIC, 23. Tomislav MILARDOVIC.

**Subs:** 1. Frano SARIC, 3. Stefan JESENJEK, 13. Dario LASIC, 21. Martin HANA, 22. Mustafa ALIBEYI.

**Goals:** Cuze 7', Loncaric 83' (pen).  
**Yellow cards:** Piorkowski, Grgic, Jozeljic.

**Venue:** Green Gully Reserve  
**Crowd:** 500

**Man of the match:**  
 Graham Hockless (Gully)

# Gully Cruise As Saints Sunk

By Mark Ivkovic

THE Green Gully Cavaliers have recorded their first win of the season as they defeated the St Albans Saints 3-2 on Saturday afternoon at Green Gully Reserve.

Both sides went into the highly anticipated Brimbank derby still searching for their first three points of the season after both sides had only managed to gain 1 point out of the first 3 games of the season.

The Saints started off the much more settled side as they weren't afraid to take the play to last year's champions.

A solid opening few minutes from the Saints was rewarded with an early goal in the 6th minute.

A deep ball from Daniel Visevic caught a sluggish Green Gully defence napping and allowed Maks Cuze to beat a failed offside trap and with only Nikola Roganovic to beat, the Saints skipper easily put the ball past the Gully shot stopper to put his side in the lead.

St. Albans continued to take the game to the home side as Liam Cannell was dominant in the middle of the park for the desperate looking Saints outfit.

However it wasn't long before Gully settled into the game and the trio of Hockless, Flemming and Vargas began to take control of things.

A fantastic ball in from Hockless saw Matthew Sanders' powerful looping headed effort saved superbly well by Ante Loncaric to keep his side in the lead.

Andy Vargas began to stamp his authority on the game and was only a whisker away from getting the home side on level terms when his powerful 40 yard strike flew just past Loncaric's left hand upright.

Gully continued to throw men forward in search of a much needed equaliser and again Loncaric pulled off a fantastic acrobatic save, this time from Brent Fisher's close range effort.

The resulting corner was



The Green Machine celebrate after Andy Vargas (centre) scores a beauty to put Gully in front 2-1. Photo: STEVE STAREK

whipped in by Hockless and somehow Cameron Drake managed to beat 5 defenders to the ball and made no mistake from 6 yards out to level the scores on the half hour mark.

Two minutes later and Gully deservedly took the lead through a great piece of individual brilliance from none other than Andy Vargas.

Vargas broke through from the middle of the park, striding forward towards the Saints defence and as they continued to drop off and sit back, it allowed Vargas all the time in the world to unleash a beautiful 30 yard strike into the roof of the net.

The Cavaliers continued to

dominate the midfield and press the St. Albans defence as the Saints were chasing shadows for the remainder of the first half.

The second half saw St. Albans come out firing early, much like the beginning of the first half.

A great ball inside the area found an unmarked Liam Cannell but his poorly timed headed effort went wide of Roganovic's goal.

The Saints continued to push forward early on in search of an equaliser and Stefan Piorkowski's long range effort nearly snuck into the bottom right hand corner but luckily for Roganovic and the Cavaliers, Vargas was there to clear the ball off the line.

As the Saints attempted to play the ball around in the middle of the park, their lack of tactical awareness was exposed yet again when they were dispossessed and caught on the counter.

Flemming's deft touch found Fisher through on goal and his tidy finish from a narrow angle extended the Cavaliers lead in the 58th minute.

Hockless continued to dominate the midfield battle as the St. Albans side seemed to have run out of steam in the hot and humid conditions.

Brian Chesson was fouled by Pasquale Vizzari inside the area with 8 minutes to play to hand St. Albans a much needed lifeline.

Josip Loncaric made no mistake from the spot and all of a sudden the Saints were back in the game despite Gully's dominance.

However, much has been the problem for the opening four games for St. Albans, there was no penetration or desire going forward and they were unable to threaten the Gully defence yet again as the home side ran out deserved 3-2 winners.

The Saints now go into the massive derby against the Springvale White Eagles on Sunday knowing that only three points can get their season back on track. Kick-off at Churchill Reserve is at 5:00pm.



St Albans Saints' Martin Hana gets airborne to keep the ball moving as Green Gully's Andy Vargas keeps his eyes firmly on the ball. Photo: STEVE STAREK



Green Gully's Cameron Drake stretches to hoof one over as St Albans' Goran Jozeljic's courageously puts his head in the line of danger. Photo: STEVE STAREK

DANDENONG THUNDER



2

HUME CITY



1

## Match Details

Dandenong Thunder:  
 Webster S., Lapham K.,  
 Rexhepi S., Gray S., Harrison B. (Barnes J. 74'),  
 Tomic A., Sherbon L., Taylor C., Theodore M., Korcari V. (Knox N. 81'), Cooke S. (Kearny, L 77').

Scorers: Sherbon 41', Knox 88'

Hume City:  
 Acevski L., Pace S., Delizia F. (McGough M. 71'), Bozinovski S., Riccobene P., Delic D., Cardozo R., Weir S., Thompson R. (Vlahos A. 65'), Petrevski Z., Erdogan I. (Bozovski, M. 56')

Scorers: Thompson 55'

Bookings: Bozinovski, Petrevski (Y)

Man of the match:  
 Korcari, V. (Thunder)

Venue: George Andrews reserve

Crowd: 1200

# Thunder Mettle stands up to City Steel

By George Stogiannou

**AN 88th minute goal from tall substitute striker Nathan Knox fired Dandenong Thunder to a 2-1 home win over Hume City in the fourth round of the Alanic VPL on Saturday evening.**

Thunder's fourth win in a row inflicted Hume's first defeat of the season. The game lived up to expectations of a close, hard fought battle between an experienced, physically imposing City and a young Thunder outfit filled with fresh faced talent.

Statistically the home team dominated a lively first half in terms of both shots on goal 8-4, and the quality of opportunities. The visitors' flat back four looked vulnerable on several occasions against the speed and mobility of Thunder front man Stephen Cooke who had a couple of excellent chances to score including a one-on-one with City keeper Lupce Acevski. The wizened Acevski was more than up to the challenge producing an excellent diving save.

However even the formidable Acevski was powerless to prevent Thunder's opening goal just before the break, when City defender Steven Pace's weak clearance rebounded to Thunder skipper Veton Korcari in behind Hume's back four. Korcari's perfect square pass across the box served up Luke Sherbon for a first time strike past Acevski into the net. Down the other end, Hume striker Zoran Petrevski's header produced a finger tip save from Stuart Webster in the Thunder goal, just before the half-time whistle.

Hume squared the ledger soon after the break when midfielder Ross Thompson converted a pen-



George Andrews Reserve erupts after Nathan Knox (centre) buries his 88th minute winner and maintains Dandenong Thunder's blistering start to the season. PHOTO: ANITA MILAS

alty kick awarded when City's Richie Cardozo went down on the edge of the box under an Archie Tomic challenge.

The home team responded by pressing forward and Korcari rounding his defender in the box, flashed a shot wide of Acevski's far post. The pace of the game was extracting a heavy toll on the visitors with two defenders and a midfielder requiring substitution in the first 25 minutes of the second half. Meanwhile Acevski continued to be the busier of the two keepers producing good saves from a Sherbon free kick and a Cooke strike from inside the box.

With 15 minutes to go, Thunder

coach Stuart Munro introduced strikers Liam Kearny and Nathan Knox to keep the pressure on a tiring City defence. The move paid handsome dividends with both subs involved in the winner. Kearny drew a foul out wide from Hume's Phillip Riccobene and from the resultant free kick, the ball spilt on the edge of the six yard box where Knox pounced to strike home the winner to the joy of the Thunder faithful. The visitors were unable to mount an effective counter-charge in the short time remaining and Thunder were able to claim another victory.

Thunder coach Munro afterwards praised the character of

his team. "The last few games people have been talking about how fluent they (Thunder) have been playing their football, but I thought today they've shown tremendous character to withstand what was going on. Hume put us under a lot of pressure. They're a strong physical team.

"The foul count was fairly high today. But we withstood that and got a winner. I think we deserved it. On chances alone I think we fully deserved it. Sometimes you get all these chances (like we did in the first half), you don't take them, and all of a sudden the sucker punch comes, you lose a goal as cheaply as the one we lost, and some teams will just

fold and they'll accept it wasn't their day.

"But our boys stuck at it, and Nathan's posted a winner over the line and it's been a tremendous day again for the boys."

Next week Thunder host Heidelberg United and Hume City host Northcote City in the Northern suburbs derby.

Meanwhile, Thunder expect their playing stocks to receive a further boost with the imminent return of ace full back Jack Hingert from the now defunct A-League outfit, North Queensland Fury. Hingert was a vital member of Dandenong's minor premiership winning team of 2009.



Hume City's Ross Thompson (12) converts the penalty kick to put his team back on level terms. PHOTO: ANITA MILAS



Dandenong Thunder are ecstatic after the late goal kept their 100% record intact. PHOTO: ANITA MILAS

## SPRINGVALE W EAGLES



1

## MELBOURNE KNIGHTS



1

## Match Details

Springvale White Eagles SC: Scott AGUSTIN, Adam EWIN, Boris BAJIC, Tome RACUNICA (Rados TOMIC 87'), Gordan MRDIC, Milos LUJIC, Dushan NIKOLIC, Dominic D'ANGELO (Lewis KARANICOLAS 81'), Zoran VUKAS, Nikola VELJOVIC, Goran ZORIC.

Unused Subs: Christian MORALES, Paul MAGHIAR, Andres JEREZ.

Yellow Cards: Bajic 76', Mrdic 85', Nikolic 91'.

Goal: Mrdic 42'.

Melbourne Knights SC: John MARTIN, Shaun ROMEIN (Daniel DRAGICEVIC 46'), Ryan FILIPOVIC, Ben SUREY, Leo SHIN, Meyer Carlos DE CAMAGO JUNIOR, Josip MAGDIC (Craig SWEENEY 72'), Josip KOZIC, Anthony COLOSIMO, Jean Charles DUBOIS, Mathieu-Luc WELMANT. Unused Subs: Amadu KOROMA, Aaron ROMEIN, Jacob COLOSIMO.

Yellow Cards: Romein 45', Surey 91'. Goal: Dubois 67'.

# Springvale Hold Knights

By Steve Talevski

**SPRINGVALE** White Eagles managed to hold onto a 1-1 draw in windy and wet conditions against Melbourne Knights at White Eagles Stadium on Sunday afternoon.

Springvale remain without a win after five matches in their return season to the Victorian Premier League, while Melbourne Knights remain two points outside the top 5.

The game began as a cagey affair as Springvale pushed early to get a lead as there attacking options of Milos Lujic and Goran Zoric gave the Knights no room to spread the ball along there backline.

The referee was then forced to decide not to hand Springvale striker Milos Lujic a penalty after a controversial foul which was met with complaints from the home crowd.

As the game went on it was met by a telling factor as wind and rain affected the movement of the ball. Both defences were important figures in the early stages of the match as influential players such as Knights winger Mathieu-luc Nelmant were kept quiet.

The first solid chance of the game came to the Tome Racunica who miss controlled his first touch from a well crossed delivery by Milos Lujic.

As the game continued both Scott Agustin and John Martin became prominent in their goals by clearing numerous corners

and attacks.

Zoran Vukas find himself in some space in the 36th minute as his well hit shot went past the top right corner as Springvale continued to push on.

The game was changed in the 42nd minute as Gordan Mrdic was able to get onto a rebound in the 18 yard box to slot in the opening goal of the game and send the Springvale crowd into celebrations.

As the half came to a close knights defender Shaun Romein was given a yellow card for his foul on goal scorer Gordan Mrdic.

The second half began with a substitution for the Melbourne Knights that would tell to be crucial as Daniel Dragicevic came on for the yellow carded Shaun Romein.

Jean Charles Dubois was able created some space in the 51st minute and put his shot just wide from the right post as the Knights began to play some creative attacks.

Gordan Zoric impressed for Springvale as his well-placed cross to captain Tome Racunica forced the knights keeper Martin John to make a comfortable save.

Springvale continued to find themselves in space as the Knights attacked and a scramble in the knights defence saw Zoran Vukas's shot go just wide.

Josip Magdic had a golden opportunity for the Knights in the 60th minute as he was left un-

marked from an Anthony Colosimo cross that saw him place his header straight to Scott Agustin's chest.

Melbourne Knights hit the equaliser in the 67th minute as substitute Daniel Dragicevic crossed to Jean Charles Dubois who put his header into the corner for a well-placed goal. Jean Charles Dubois then had a chance to hand the knights the lead but his shot was well saved by the leg of Springvale goalkeeper Scott Agustin.

Melbourne Knights continued to look threatening and winger Mathieu-Luc Nelmant found himself loose inside the 18 yard box forcing Scott Agustin into a miraculous save towards his top left corner from a volley.

Scott Agustin continued to keep the score level as the Knights failed once again to scramble through a goal as Agustin made another big save.

Springvale goal scorer Gordan Mrdic received a yellow card in the 85th minute as the Knights missed another opportunity and saw a header fly over the crossbar.

The Melbourne Knights midfield controlled by captain Ben Surey continued to push for a defining goal and were handed there last chance of the game as Anthony Colosimo's cross skimmed over the crossbar which almost gave the Scott Agustin a tricky situation.

In injury time Springvale found themselves in a counter attack as Gordan Zoric's shot smacked the crossbar to almost hand a shock last minute winner for the home team.



Gordan Mrdic lets the fans know all about it after scoring for SWE. Goran Zoric adds his voice to the celebration. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Springvale look to earn their first win of the season next Sunday at Churchill Reserve against St Albans Saints, while Melbourne Knights look to enter the top 5 when they host VTC Football at Knights Stadium on Wednesday night.

In what proved to be a tight stalemate, the game ended as a 1-1 draw with an impressive performance by man of the match Ben Surey.



Not what it appears to be ... Adam Ewin is not scoring an own goal. The ref has just whistled for a foul by Jean Dubois on SWE keeper Scott August. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON



Mathieu-Luc Welmant (Knights) grabs a handful of Boris Bajic's shirt as he tries to get past. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

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**5-A-SIDE  
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SOCCER**

HEIDELBERG UNITED



2

SOUTH MELBOURNE



2

## Match Details

Heidelberg United: 1. Griffin McMASTER, 2. Yared HAILEMELKOT, 7. Hamlet ARMANIAN (8. Andrew Nabbut 59'), 10. Adrian CACERES (4. John LAZARIDIS 66'), 11. Evan CHRISTODOULOU, 14. Craig ELVIN, 16. Steve MARTIN, 18. Osagie EDERARO, 20. Saso ALEKSOVSKI (23. Takanori NISHIMOTO 71), 21. Richard GREER, 22. Ben WARING.  
 Subs not used: 3. Les DOUMBALIS, 5. George PAPADOPoulos, 32. Jason KOUTSODONTIS (GK)  
 Goals: Saso ALEKSOVSKI 10', Osagie EDERARO 50'  
 Yellow Cards: Saso ALEKSOVSKI, Steve MARTIN

South Melbourne: 1. Stefaan SARDELIC (21. Zaim ZENELLI 70'), 3. Rhodri PAYNE, 4. Steven O'DOR, 5. Daniel VASILEVSKI, 6. Steven TOPALOVIC, 8. Carl RECHIA, 11. Jesse KRNCVIC, 15. Fernando DE MORAES, 18. Marinos GASPARIS, 23. Sebastian PETROVIC (33. Bobby RUSSELL 75'), 25. Kyle JURYEFF (14. Kamal IBRAHIM 65')  
 Subs not used: 17. Mackie SIMMONS, 24. Nicholas JACOBS.  
 Goals: Jesse KRNCVIC 29', Marinos Gasparis 90'  
 Yellow Cards: Fernando de MORAES, Jesse KRNCVIC, Rhodri PAYNE

Player of the Match: Griffin McMaster (Heidelberg UNITED)  
 Crowd: 1000 at the Olympic Village

# Points Shared After Late Derby Drama

By John Fotinos

Long-time rivals Heidelberg United & South Melbourne have played out an action-packed 2-2 draw at the Olympic Village in Sunday's Round 4 action in the Alanic VPL competition.

A Marinos Gasparis header in second half injury time meant South Melbourne was able to avoid its first defeat of the season. Heidelberg United twice led in the match with goals to Saso Aleksovski & Osagie Ederaro early in each half of play, only for the visitors to equalise on both occasions, firstly through Jessie Krncevic & at the finish through Gasparis.

A heavy downpour early in the afternoon saw the postponement of the Under 21 match to avoid pitch damage, and meant the main game was played in greasy conditions.

The first opening was fashioned just minutes in by the lively Ederaro, but the Heidelberg forward hit a shot well over the bar.

Ederaro's pace & guile worried the South defence, and it was not surprising that he was able to turn & outpace Topalovic and cut the ball back for Aleksovski to slide the ball home after 10 minutes to give Heidelberg United the lead.

South Melbourne looked to hit back & forced Heidelberg 'keeper Griffin McMaster into a couple of crucial saves



Heidelberg United's Osagie Ederaro scores and celebrates in the derby game yesterday. Photos: ANITA MILAS

through efforts by Krncevic & Vasilevski. In a match that see-sawed from end to end, Heidelberg missed a chance to go two goals up when Ederaro slid the ball just wide of the post with Sardelic beaten.

On the half hour mark, Krncevic put South back in the game after he shrugged off Elvin and shot strongly past McMaster to restore parity to the scoreline. The teams went to the main break with the score locked at 1-1, and the derby up for grabs.

Heidelberg United took the lead for the second time fol-

owing a strong run by Osagie Ederaro, who hit a low shot that was only parried by Sardelic. The loose ball fell obligingly for the Heidelberg striker who had followed in to slap the ball home in the midst of three South defenders.

Again, it was South Melbourne looking to grab an equaliser, but some good positional keeping by McMaster twice more thwarted Krncevic. A South corner led to the ball falling to Topalovic, whose volley was headed clear by Hailemalkot, as Heidelberg desperately

clung to the lead. With just 20 minutes left to play, South Melbourne was forced to replace 'keeper Stefaan Sardelic with understudy Zaim Zenelli after Sardelic suffered a knock in smothering a goal scoring opportunity to Heidelberg's Andrew Nabbut.

The visitors' pressure told late on when DeMoraes foated an inch-perfect cross to Gasparis, who had drifted in at the far post unmarked to easily nod home an equaliser to leave a pulsating derby locked at 2-2.

Heidelberg United will be no doubt disappointed to have let slip two points so late on, but must regroup to face the high-flying Dandenong Thunder at George Andrews Reserve next Saturday evening (March 19 at 7:30pm).

South Melbourne travels to Jack Edwardes Reserve next Friday (March 18 at 8:15pm) to take on the also unbeaten Oakleigh Cannons.

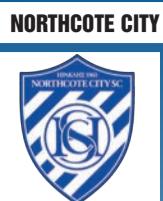


Jesse Krncevic opens the scoring for South Melbourne and celebrates with Clarendon St Corner fans. Photo: ANITA MILAS

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NORTHCOTE CITY

5

RICHMOND EAGLES



2

## Match Details

Northcote City: C.Petropoulos, H.D'Agostino, K.Konstantinidis, S.Torrens (A. Chiappetta 81'). P.Savio, J.Trifiro (N.Tzoulis 39'), G.Trifiro, H.Kinigopoulos, N.Curtis, J.Kalifatidis, T.Rixon (G.McHeileh 81').

Scorers: J.Trifiro 3' T.Rixon 40' 65'

J.Kalifatidis 51' 90'

Yellow cards: None

Red cards: None

Oakleigh Cannons: S.Gal, E.Karahan, R.Antoniadis (A.Viola 62'), M.Bissinger (M.Eterovic 46'), D.Tsiaras, T.Purcell, M.Catalano, C.O'Hare, A.Kovacic, S.Wilson (E.Batsis 60'), M.Ferrante.

Scorers: E.Batsis 61' A.Kovacic 86'

Yellow cards: M.Ferrante 18'

Red cards: None

Man of the Match: N.Curtis

Venue: John Cain Memorial Park

Crowd: 400



Paul Savio clears the ball as Richmond's Michael Catalano applies the pressure. Photo: PETER PSARROS



## Alanic VPL Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
<b>Oakleigh Cannons</b>	5	4	1	0	12	5	13
<b>Dandenong Thunder</b>	4	4	0	0	11	3	12
<b>South Melbourne</b>	5	2	2	1	13	11	8
<b>Northcote City</b>	4	2	1	1	9	6	7
<b>Bentleigh Greens</b>	5	2	1	2	7	6	7
<b>VTC Football</b>	4	2	0	2	7	7	6
<b>Hume City</b>	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
<b>Heidelberg Utd</b>	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
<b>Melbourne Knights</b>	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
<b>Green Gully Cavaliers</b>	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
<b>Springvale White Eagles</b>	5	0	2	3	8	16	2
<b>St Albans SaintS</b>	4	0	1	3	5	10	1
<b>Richmond Eagles</b>	4	0	1	3	4	11	1

handled the ball in the box. Chris O'Hare stepped up to take the penalty, but he slammed his shot against the crossbar. Michael Catalano capitalising on the rebound only to be ruled offside by the assistant referee.

City were unlucky not to double their lead on the quarter-hour, with Trent Rixon's close range shot expertly saved by Gal, the rebound falling to Nicholas Curtis who curled a left foot shot just wide of the far post.

Richmond's best chances to equalise fell to Timmy Purcell just after the half-hour. A thunderbolt from long range forced Chris Petropoulos into a finger tip save over the crossbar. The resultant corner provided Purcell with another shot from even closer range, the evergreen Harry Kinigopoulos clearing his strike off the line.

City ultimately doubled their lead shortly before the break when Trent Rixon was the beneficiary of some fine team play from Curtis, Glen Trifiro and ultimately Kalifatidis, who delivered a pass for his captain who duly converted with a classy finish past Gal.

The scoreline read 2-0 to the hosts, and half-time could not come soon enough for the Eagles. However, the second half began much like the first ended, and this time it was Kalifatidis who took advantage of Rixon's neat flick-on to blast his shot past the hapless Eagles custodian.

Richmond were finally rewarded for their tireless work after the hour, Evan Batsis, barely on the pitch for more than a minute, the recipient of some good lead up play from his teammates in midfield. But any hopes of a stirring comeback were quashed barely a few minutes later, with Glen Trifiro's wicked corner punished by the head of a determined Rixon. To their credit, the Eagles continued to preserve in the heat despite the three-goal deficit, and a second goal came three minutes from time, Michael Ferrante setting up an unmarked Antun Kovacic who picked up a rare Rich-



High fives all round for Northcote City as Glen Trifiro (10), Trent Rixon (9) and James Kalifatidis (18) celebrate Jason Trifiro's opening goal. PHOTOS: PETER PSARROS

mond goal.

The goal glut didn't end there, and Kalifatidis nipped in for his second in the final minute of added time, fed once again by the impressive Glen Trifiro.

With successive wins under their belt, Northcote City will take a great deal of confidence to Broadmeadows Valley Park, where they face Hume City on Sunday afternoon, who will be smarting after their first loss of the season to Dandenong Thunder. Richmond return home on Saturday, desperate for a win against Green Gully who will be buoyed by their first win against St Albans this week.



Samuel Torrens and James Kalifatidis (18) share the joy as Northcote run away with the game.. PHOTOS: PETER PSARROS

## Alanic VPL Round 5

Wed 16 Mar 8:30PM  
Melbourne Knights v N.T.C

Fri 18 Mar 8:30PM  
Oakleigh Cannons v Sth Melbourne  
Jack Edwards Reserve

Sun 20 Mar 3:00PM  
Richmond Eagles v Green Gully  
Kevin Bartlett Reserve

Sat 19 Mar 7:00PM  
Dandenong Thunder v Heidelberg  
Utd  
George Andrews Reserve

Sun 20 Mar 5:00PM  
St Albans Saints v Springvale  
White Eagles  
Churchill Reserve

Sun 20 Mar 3:00PM  
Hume City v Northcote City  
Broadmeadows Valley Park

Sun 20 Mar 6:00PM  
Melb Knights v Bentleigh Greens  
Knights Stadium

## Under 21s

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pt
Oakleigh Cannons	5	4	1	0	17	6	13	
Dandenong Thunder	4	3	1	0	14	5	10	
South Melbourne	4	3	1	0	13	6	10	
Heidelberg Utd	3	2	1	0	6	2	7	
Hume City	4	1	2	1	8	5	5	
Green Gully Cavaliers	4	1	2	1	6	7	5	
St Albans Saints	4	1	1	2	5	3	4	
Northcote City	4	1	1	2	8	12	4	
Bentleigh Greens	5	1	1	3	6	13	4	
Springvale White Eagles	5	1	0	4	13	18	3	
VTC Football	4	1	0	3	5	12	3	
Richmond	4	1	0	3	6	14	3	

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